



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release
News from the University of Southern Indiana

Carmi native and USI instructor on board of national nursing credentialing organization

An after-hours conference call, a late-night meeting, or even a hearing before a legislative committee are the substance of a rewarding career for Wanda L. Douglas, who has spent many years as an advocate for the nursing profession and better health care. Her career encompasses nursing practice, administration, and education.

A University of Southern Indiana instructor in nursing since fall 2006, Douglas has been named to the board of directors of the American Nurse Credentialing Center (ANCC). She chairs the organization's Commission on Accreditation for 2007-09.

ANCC, a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association, is responsible for the national oversight of many nursing activities including the Magnet Recognition Program for hospitals, continuing education for nurses, and certification in a nurse's area of expertise. ANCC offers certification examinations in 40 specialty areas of nursing practice. More than 150,000 nurses around the world have ANCC certification.

Dr. Ann White, assistant dean for nursing for the USI College of Nursing and Health Professions, said Douglas' leadership role is important for nursing nationwide and reflects well on the USI nursing program.

"As an ANCC board member, Wanda is known for her expertise in these activities," White said. "This allows our nursing programs to be recognized as having a faculty member of that status. Equally important is the knowledge she brings to us, so that we provide accurate and current information to our students and area nurses."

Douglas recently traveled to Atlanta for a symposium on the Magnet program, which recognizes hospitals for excellence in nursing services and care.

"During periods of nursing shortages, it was noticed that some hospitals never had shortages," Douglas said, "Researchers studied those hospitals. They learned that hospitals with strong nursing programs — where nurses have input and can advocate for patients — are successful in recruiting and retaining nurses."

The Magnet program is based on quality indicators and standards of nursing practice. More than 250 health-care organizations in 44 states have achieved Magnet status.

Douglas also attended a recent ANCC meeting in Washington, D.C., to discuss interdisciplinary continuing education — specifically for nursing, pharmacy, and medicine. ANCC wants to recognize and promote inter-professional continuing education and streamline the accreditation process for providers of interdisciplinary programs.

Douglas served as executive director of the Louisiana State Nurses Association from 1994-98 and as director of education for the Texas Nurses Association from 1998-2006. She often presented oral and written testimony on nursing issues before state legislative committees. In addition to nursing shortages, prescriptive authority for advanced practice nurses and continuing nurse education were among the issues she addressed.

"I love political activism and the legislative process," Douglas said, "It's important for nurses to be involved in the issues because it's our scope. It's better that we make decisions and have input than let someone else do that for us.

"The interesting thing about lobbying is that every legislator has some experience with nursing. Everybody has had a child, spouse, parent, or friend who has had nursing care. If nurses can tell their stories, legislators will listen. If it's for the good of the patient, they usually will support the legislation."

When Douglas joined USI, she returned to her Midwestern roots. She grew up in Carmi, Illinois, and earned an associate degree in nursing at Olney Central College in Olney, Illinois. She completed a bachelor's degree in nursing at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Odessa, Texas, and a master's in nursing at the University of Texas at Arlington. She also has pursued doctoral work at Louisiana State University Medical Center.

Douglas teaches courses in nursing education and nursing management.