

# *Happenings*

## **Institute for Philosophical Nursing Research**

**June Kikuchi**

The nursing profession, today, is faced with far-reaching practical problems – problems such as the lack of clarity of practice boundaries among the health professions, inappropriate use of nursing manpower in the health care system, and inadequate recognition of the extent of its contribution to the health of society. These problems have not yielded to scientific and pragmatic attempts to solve them. Their solution (and that of similar problems) rests, in large part, in the attainment of philosophical nursing knowledge that underlies the sound advancement of the practice of nursing. For the purpose of identifying the aim, scope, and nature of nursing practice, the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing established the Institute for Philosophical Nursing Research in 1988. It was established on the assumption that research infrastructures of this kind are indispensable in any sustained effort to advance thought in a particular area of inquiry.

### ***Aim***

The aim of the Institute is to provide leadership in the pursuit of philosophical nursing knowledge which underlies the advancement of the practice of nursing – the philosophical nursing knowledge required to guide and unite nurse practitioners, educators, administrators, and researchers in the development and use of nursing knowledge for the benefit of those who receive and depend on nursing care.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives of the Institute are six-fold:

- to undertake sustained study of philosophical nursing questions
- to promote the development of philosophical nursing knowledge
- to provide opportunities for nurse scholars to participate in philosophical nursing research
- to promote dialogue in philosophical nursing matters

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- to collaborate with other disciplines on philosophical nursing questions of an interdisciplinary nature
- to disseminate the results of philosophical nursing research/scholarly endeavours

### ***Activities***

The Institute has engaged in several major undertakings which have brought it wide recognition and acclaim:

- development and organization of three invitational philosophical biennial nursing research conferences (a fourth conference is to be held in May 1995)
- publication of two books entitled *Philosophic Inquiry in Nursing* and *Developing a Philosophy of Nursing* containing papers presented at the Institute's conferences
- submission of research/conference/operating grant proposals
- presentation of philosophical nursing research/scholarly papers at local, national, and international conferences
- establishment of an annual open philosophical nursing lecture series
- initiation of an informal postdoctoral philosophical nursing study program.

### **Administration**

The Institute is being developed as a non-profit research unit within the Faculty of Nursing, under the direction of its co-founders: Dr. June Kikuchi (Professor, Faculty of Nursing) and Dr. Helen Simmons (Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing; and formerly Special Projects Consultant, Nursing Division, Edmonton Board of Health) who serve as its Director and Associate Director, respectively. It is dependent on grants and donations for its operation. Its development and operation to date have been made possible through the generosity of the University of Alberta Master of Nursing Trust Fund, the Winspear Foundation, the Alberta Foundation for Nursing Research, the University of Alberta Conference Fund, and individual citizen donations.

### **Future Direction**

To spearhead innovative developments in what is essentially virgin territory, infrastructures such as the Institute are necessary. However, sustained adequate funding is also required to realize the full potential of any infrastructure. Such funding, as we know, is difficult to come by, especially when it is sought for endeavors of a philosophical nature that will not result in "quick fixes" or powerful new technologies. The Institute continues to seek the funding required to more fully realize its potential. Adequately funded, it stands to make

a difference in the development of nursing practice and the nursing profession. With this in mind, the Institute has concentrated on activities which hold promise for putting it on a firmer footing, in its fund-seeking endeavors.

Planned activities, as funding and other resources permit, include: the conduct, on a sustained basis, of nursing and collaborative philosophical nursing research projects; the provision of philosophical nursing research associateships and assistantships; the offering of philosophical nursing research colloquia, workshops, and summer institutes; and the establishment of a visiting nurse-philosopher program, a formal postdoctoral philosophical nursing study program, and a philosophical nursing research journal library.