

DATE: August 15, 2006

TO: Roy Austensen, Provost

From: Theresa Kessler

RE: Caterpillar Report

Over the past year, I engaged in activities related to receiving the Caterpillar Award for Excellence in Teaching. During the spring of 2006, I presented a faculty breakfast workshop on "Visualize the Class Content to Improve Student Learning." The purpose of this presentation was to share how students learn: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Approaches to teaching must bear these methods of learning in mind, thus faculty can improve teaching strategies using these fundamentals of learning style. This presentation sparked a desire by faculty to have another workshop on integrating visual teaching techniques using available electronic resources. Katherine was going to put this topic on the agenda for next year.

I used the Caterpillar resources to work with faculty within the College of Nursing to create "hands on" learning experiences within the VNLC. This had been a goal of mine for several years, but never had the resources to accomplish it. The Caterpillar funds helped secure the resources needed to integrate this independent form of student learning in the lab. I worked with other CON faculty to develop and implement this project. This helped meet the goal of working with other faculty to enhance teaching.

On a more informal level, I spoke with other faculty about ideas/suggestions regarding teaching techniques inside and outside of the classroom. A couple of examples included: how to manage objective testing in a large classroom environment to decrease the potential use of unauthorized aid and how to add creative teaching strategies to increase student engagement within the classroom.

I also used my share of the stipend to attend conference sessions on clinical topics I teach within the College. Attendance at these conferences helped me learn up to date information on the delivery of nursing care and to revisit a topic I became interested in when I traveled to China: palliative care. The content on palliative care helped me decide to apply to the AACN End of Life Nursing Education Consortium Graduate Curriculum training session. I was selected to attend the training session and I am now an ELNAC Trainer. Thus, I am expected to go out and help educate other nurses on end-of-life and palliative care standards.