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## News Release RELEASE

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## IU Kokomo School of Nursing graduates first master's class

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — The Indiana University Kokomo School of Nursing reaches a significant historic milestone in December, graduating its first Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) class.

The inaugural class of fourteen – nurses working in areas that include surgery, oncology, labor and delivery, cardiac intensive care, and maternal and child health – graduate from the two-year program prepared to be leaders in the health care industry and in nurse education.

“This is one of our proudest moments,” said Assistant Dean Mary Bourke, calling the graduates “a very, very impressive first class,” graduating with a mean grade point average of 3.954.

The program is just one way IU Kokomo meets the needs of its region, Interim Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke said.

“As a regional campus, we continue to add new degrees that enhance the communities we serve,” she said. “Hospital administrators continue to call for more advanced nursing professionals, and we are pleased to provide that opportunity to nurses in our region.”

The graduates include nurses from Kokomo and nearby communities, but also several who commuted long distances to earn the degree, including Evelyn Kamoto, who drove from Elkhart.

Stacy Fackler has already benefitted from enrolling in the nursing administrator track. A year after she began the program, she was promoted to her current job, as director of maternal and child health at Community Howard Regional Health.

“Administration knew I was earning this degree, and they trusted me with this promotion,” she said. “The M.S.N. program allowed me to be with other managers, to pick their brains and learn from their life experiences. The actual assignments were so applicable to my job, it went well for me.”

A desire for change in her career led Leigh Swartzendruber to the M.S.N. program, for the nurse educator track.

“Through my M.S.N. degree in nursing education, I can affect change in nursing students for years to come,” she said. “There are so many changes in health care and nursing education. My advanced degree will allow me to make a positive contribution to both health care and nursing education.”

Swartzendruber, a pre-admission nurse at St. Joseph Hospital, also participated in a School of Nursing trip to South Korea, and found the program has given her more confidence.

“I traveled around the world and experienced culturally diverse health care and education,” she said. “That experience alone was a life changing experience, and one I will never forget. Also, I have shown my children that if you are determined and set your mind to something, you can accomplish anything.”

Lynn Lacluyse wanted to earn the M.S.N. “to have more flexibility with my nursing degree, and to be able to grow in my current role,” as manager of an intensive care unit, cardiovascular intensive care unit, and cardiac care progressive unit at Community Howard Regional Health. She chose the nurse administrator track.

While it was an intense learning process, the knowledge and skills she gained were invaluable, Lacluyse said.

“It helped with all aspects, financial knowledge, relationship knowledge, communication, being able to strategize, and research,” she said.

Combining online and face-to-face classroom instruction sets IU Kokomo’s M.S.N. program apart from others, along with its commitment to excellent student service. Faculty knows personal touch is a key part of student success.

“The bond the students have formed with one another through these two years has made the program more powerful,” Bourke said.

Enrollment in the program has doubled since the first class began in January 2012. It has been reviewed and recommended for accreditation by the Commission for Education in Nursing.

Having earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at IU Kokomo, Fackler knew the M.S.N. program would be high quality. She is already recommending friends enroll as well.

“If your end goal is to have your M.S.N., do it here and do it now,” she said. “This is the most accessible and workable program you will have. The faculty understand you have a job in addition to this, and they are so creative about being flexible and turning every experience into a learning opportunity.”

Members of IU Kokomo’s first M.S.N. class are: Jessica Marie Beaupre, Winamac; Teresa Katherine Criswell, Noblesville; Kimberly M. Easter, Marion; Stacy Michelle Fackler, Russiaville; April R. Fugle, Kokomo; Crystal Elaine Jones, Marion; Evelyn Chiwalasile Kamoto, Elkhart; Lynn Ann Lacluyse, Kokomo; Barbara Jane Miller, Kokomo; Beth A. Robbins, Greentown; Clara Jo Sessoms, Gas City; Kathy L. Shumpert, Peru; Dea Jo Stanley, Gas City; and Leigh Erin Swartzendruber, Greentown.

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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