A Million Hearts
Partnering to keep a finger on the pulse of health and wellness in our community
Dear Alumni and Friends,

We have had another outstanding year and are pleased to share with you some of the highlights. In this issue, you will find captivating stories about our outstanding accomplishments, as well as our plans for the future.

Focusing on the community as our classroom, we have partnered with Millennium Collaborative Care and Greater Buffalo United Ministries to participate in the national Million Hearts® initiative, leading interprofessional teams of students and launching our own goal of saving 1,000 hearts in Western New York.

Concern for the growing problem of opioid abuse among our citizens has turned national attention to the challenges of finding effective strategies to address this public health crisis. Dr. Yu-Ping Chang’s research sheds light on some of the innovative behavioral interventions being utilized to stem the tide of this public health concern.

Additionally, UB SON has joined other AACN schools in taking a pledge to educate advanced practice registered nursing students on the CDC Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain. We have initiated a comprehensive opioid education program to better equip our students with the knowledge needed to advance prevention, treatment and recovery.

Beyond the local and national communities, our global initiatives deliver care to underserved populations in Belize and Appalachia and provide interprofessional experiences for UB nursing, dental and pharmacy students.

Lastly, our newest endeavor, generously supported by HRSA, focuses on partnering to educate FNPs for practice in Native American, underserved and rural settings. The SON and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center will establish an innovative academic-clinical partnership to enhance primary care services for Tuscarora Indian Nation residents and Seneca Gaming Corporation employees.

We move into the coming academic year committed to our mission of developing nurse leaders who will impact health and wellness in our global society with a full complement of senior leadership as we welcome Drs. Cynthia Stuhlmiller, Yu-Ping Chang and Margaret Moss, who has published the nation’s first nursing textbook on American Indian health care needs. Additionally, we welcome Mr. Gary Mahon as associate dean for administrative services and our new Nurse Anesthetist program director, Dr. Kristine Faust.

As a member of the University at Buffalo School of Nursing community, I hope you find this issue of UBNursing magazine informative and take pride in knowing that you are a valuable part of our success.

Sincerely,

Marsha L. Lewis, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
Few events rival the experience of childbirth, for both parents and student nurses.

So for students learning to care for patients during childbirth, the University at Buffalo School of Nursing set out to examine which simulation provided the more authentic experience: one with computerized manikins or live actors portraying mothers.

The research, titled “Noelle or Mama Natalie: Does Type of Simulator Impact Confidence, Satisfaction and Performance in a Simulated Learning Experience,” was led by Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF, and Jennifer Guay, DNP, RN, associate professor and clinical assistant professor in the School of Nursing, and W. Scott Erdley, DNS, RN, CHSE, special projects simulation educational specialist at the UB Behling Simulation Center.

After realizing that UB nursing students enrolled in maternal-newborn practice courses were more focused on eliciting a response from the manikin than performing necessary nursing actions such as repositioning, touching, making eye contact or communicating, faculty began asking the question: Is a high-technology manikin the best device for a simulation experience?

Noelle, the full-bodied, computerized manikin utilized by UB, can speak, allow students to measure vital signs, facilitate birth and more. But it is also motionless, unable to change positions or facial expressions.

To complete the study, the researchers had groups of students carry out birth simulations at the Behling Simulation Center, one cohort with Noelle, and another with a paid, live actor equipped with the Mama Natalie, a low-technology simulator that can release fluids and deliver a fetus.

The research tested more than 130 nursing students and more than 30 medical students in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Each simulation included a crisis event, where either the patient begins to hemorrhage or the fetus’s heart rate drops.

After each simulation, students reported their perceived self-confidence and satisfaction with their performance. The results found that the majority of students experienced greater satisfaction and confidence when performing the simulation with an actor, with many citing the ability to gather visual cues and communicate with a living person as a benefit.

“Speaking with the patients makes all the difference. A real person has those human characteristics that gets the students to interact more.”

- Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF

However, despite the benefits of live actors and the high-cost of computerized manikins, Noelle has its advantages, she says.

Unlike the manikin, a live actor can’t alter their blood pressure or develop physical responses to medications, since students also can’t inject the actors with needles or syringes. Matching the context of the simulation to learning objectives is critical, says Raines.

Raines and Guay presented preliminary findings at the Sigma Theta Tau International 43rd Biennial Convention and plan to publish their results in the future.

The research was funded by the Patricia H. Garman Behavioral Health Nursing Endowment Fund.
The shocking statistic is one of many that led faculty in the School of Nursing to join Million Hearts®, a nationwide initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The school’s goal: to save 1,000 hearts in Western New York.

Parishioners of the Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church in Buffalo were among the first members of the community to benefit from the effort. The new screening program led by nursing faculty and students as part of the initiative has been implemented in partnership with Millennium Collaborative Care and Greater Buffalo United Ministries. Students and faculty travel to churches, clinics and health fairs, all in underserved areas, to check blood pressures, body mass index, and cholesterol levels and to perform stress screenings of community members.
One community member, Charley H. Fisher III, noted, “I went through all the screenings and evaluations and I think it showed that there’s some work to be done on my part.” He expressed his plan to exercise more after receiving his results.

For hundreds of guests like Fisher III, nursing students will provide health education, recommend aspirin therapy to patients based on screening results, and offer guidance on smoking cessation and stress reduction. After the screenings, Millennium Collaborative Care helps participants check their eligibility for Medicaid or other health insurance and find a primary care providers.

“The mission of the School of Nursing is to promote the health and wellness of our local communities. This collaboration is an opportunity for the students and faculty to live the mission of the school,” says Susan Grinslade, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, assistant dean for undergraduate programs in the UB School of Nursing.

“Engaging in this initiative provides an opportunity to promote the health and well-being of Buffalo inner city residents who may have limited access to health care and health promotion.”

The Million Hearts initiative, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, was created to fight the rise of heart disease and stroke, the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States. On average, one American dies from stroke every four minutes. Together, the diseases account for a third of all deaths in the nation, according to Million Hearts.

Like the rest of the country, heart disease plagues Buffalo too. Over the course of 30 years, Kinzer Mark Pointer has conducted 708 funerals. When Pointer, pastor of Agape Fellowship Baptist Church in Buffalo, reviewed the causes of death for his parishioners – many of whom are African American – he found a common thread of eight chronic diseases: cancer, diabetes, hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, emphysema, substance abuse, HIV and, the leader, heart disease.

“I discovered that about 70 percent of the people who I buried had died prematurely according to the CDC’s expectation of lifespan for Americans,” says Pointer, who discovered that the average age of death for his members was 61 years old.

“Individual behaviors are important, but unless we change the community, and create opportunities for the community to improve their health, we’re going to have poor outcomes.”

The realization led Pointer and other local pastors to create Greater Buffalo United Ministries, a faith-based initiative to minimize health disparities in Western New York whose membership includes 58 churches.

The initial screening events took place during the spring semester and marked the first major event partnering UB School of Nursing with the Greater Buffalo United Ministries and Millennium Collaborative Care, an organization serving Western New York’s eight counties that is dedicated to reducing avoidable hospital use.

The School of Nursing’s decision to join Million Hearts began with a class, “Health Promotion and Disease Prevention within Populations.” The course, led by nursing Clinical Associate Professors Dianne Loomis, DNP, FNP-BC, and Loralee Sessanna, DNS, RN, CNS, AHN-BC, was designed to teach students how to improve health outcomes among underserved populations that face health disparities.

“Right now, the majority of their clinical experiences are hospital-based. And that’s not the way health care is going to be. Health care is going to be about community and population health, and looking at the bigger picture,” says Loomis. A service learning component was added to enhance the student’s learning experiences.

Health care is going to be about community and population health, and looking at the bigger picture.

- Dianne Loomis, DNP, RN, FNP-C

For more information about Million Hearts, visit: millionhearts.hhs.gov.
Addressing Prescription Opioid Abuse in Chronic Pain Patients

Donna A. Tyrpak

Opioid abuse and opioid-related deaths are a growing public health problem in communities across the United States – and with many primary care providers reporting being inadequately prepared to identify and assist patients with substance use disorders, it is vital to arm current and future health professionals with the appropriate resources and methods to combat this crisis.

Yu-Ping Chang, PhD, RN, FGSA, interim associate dean for research and scholarship and a mental health and addictions researcher, is doing just that. She found that motivational interviewing (MI), a form of behavioral intervention, is an effective tool to curb abuse. Her study on the effects of MI on prescription opioid adherence demonstrated positive effects in a primary care office-based setting.

MI, a brief intervention that capitalizes on an individual’s motivation to change problematic behavior, was found to enhance prescription opioid adherence among older adults with chronic nonmalignant pain who are at risk for misuse. This provides important information to health care providers about the feasibility of implementing such an intervention in outpatient settings where at-risk patients are increasingly seeking help for substance use issues.

While prescription opioid analgesics are commonly prescribed pain medications, the transition from prescription opioid use to opioid abuse leading to heroin abuse has not been studied thoroughly. Evidence suggests that market forces, including accessibility and cost, are driving the transition from prescription opioids to increased heroin use.

Policies enacted by the FDA to deter opioid misuse and abuse may play a role in the recent call to action stressing the importance of preparing primary care providers with the tools they need to recognize prescription drug misuse and abuse before individuals turn to illicit drugs as an alternative. According to the FDA, such policies include public educational efforts, prescription drug monitoring programs, increased enforcement efforts to address doctor shopping and pill mills, regulatory actions such as diverting individuals with substance use disorders to drug courts with mandated engagement in treatment, and abuse-deterrent formulations.

Armed with this knowledge, the UB School of Nursing has joined other American Association of Colleges of Nursing members in pledging its commitment to the White House National Opioid Education Campaign. The aim is to educate advanced practice registered nursing students on the guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain by implementing a plan to introduce educational materials incorporating MI into the family nurse practitioner (FNP) curriculum – a valuable marriage of evidence-based research with clinical practice.

Educational materials are now incorporated into courses throughout the FNP curriculum. Lectures include instruction on
how to screen and assess patients for risk of opioid misuse, as well as training on initiating a dialogue with those who misuse or abuse opioids.

Chang observes that for students, it may be challenging to start a dialogue with those in need of behavioral intervention – but that dialogue is necessary to augment the patient’s motivation to change problematic behavior, and to encourage adherence to their medication regimen.

While offering support and encouragement to patients may be more intuitive, practitioners must be equipped with an arsenal of skills that enable them to establish a trusted and therapeutic relationship that promotes self-efficacy. Students learn skills such as reflective listening, affirmation techniques and open-ended questioning to encourage candid conversation. They also practice communication methods to summarize sessions, which reinforces discussion and builds motivation to substitute harmful behaviors with healthy behaviors. Student knowledge is evaluated through simulation of interviewing techniques.

Chang recently received a grant from the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York to develop course materials that will enhance nursing students’ competency in caring for older adults with mental health and substance abuse issues. According to Chang, “MI is an essential skill for all practitioners. We must prepare our students with the knowledge needed to screen, assess and intervene for those individuals deemed at risk for opioid abuse. Behavioral intervention in a primary care setting is the key to success, and patient education is critical to adherence.”

Mindfulness: A Promising Intervention

Donna A. Tyrpak

While motivational interviewing (MI) utilizes motivation to change and augment problem behaviors, another treatment modality based on acceptance of behavior is also being employed by researchers to tackle substance abuse problems. Depression and substance abuse are common co-existing conditions in chronic pain patients and often compromise the treatment outcomes if left untreated, an issue recently explored by Yu-Ping Chang and 2016 DNP graduate Kathleen Barrett.

“In the first decade of the 21st century, the US population consumed roughly 80 percent of the world’s supply of prescription opioids, demonstrating not only a problem of chronic pain, but also the increasing use of opioids as an expeditious pain treatment, despite its potential for harm,” says Barrett, citing research conducted by Vowles et al. (2015). “Acceptance and use of non-pharmacological methods of treating pain may decrease the growing concern regarding opioid prescription use and misuse.”

Mindfulness, defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment while acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, is gaining ground as a therapeutic technique for chronic pain, depression and substance abuse.

Mindfulness approaches are designed to focus an individual’s attention on the present while directing focus away from distracting or worrisome thoughts, thus allowing for acceptance of the present situation. Chang, along with her research team, are planning to employ this modality along with a care-as-usual arm for an upcoming randomized control study to evaluate the outcomes of a mindfulness intervention on patients with chronic pain and co-existing mental health conditions in primary care. Exploring behavioral interventions as viable strategies to manage those at risk for nonadherence to pain management regimens shows some promise in the battle against prescription opioid abuse, but future research is needed to explore the long-term efficacy of these treatments.
Twenty-five percent of individuals who begin abusing prescription drugs before the age of 14 will eventually develop a substance use disorder (SUD) later in life, according to results from a national study, as reported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2014). And, NIDA reports, the majority of people with a substance use disorder started using before age 18 and developed their disorder by age 20.

Patricia Nisbet, DNP and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Program coordinator, who is also a PMHNP in an integrated primary care pediatric practice, primarily sees adolescents for psychiatric assessment and medication management. After observing a high prevalence of substance use issues among patients, Nisbet identified through literature review that as many as 82 percent of adolescents who are hospitalized for psychiatric disorders also have a substance use disorder, and 60 percent in community samples have co-occurring SUD’s and a psychiatric disorder.

“This complicates treatment because an SUD and a psychiatric disorder are often not treated concurrently,” explains Nisbet. “Because substance use and psychiatric disorders often mimic each other, it is difficult to tease apart the symptoms and determine if the patient is presenting with a psychiatric disorder, substance use disorder or both.”

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to substance use issues – with an immature pre-frontal cortex but simultaneous rapid brain changes and developments occurring up to the age of 25, adolescents and young adults are more prone to poor impulse control and decision making. They are more susceptible to SUDs, regardless of a psychiatric diagnosis.

“Adolescents do not have the same triggers as adults that tell them they’ve had too much to drink, for example. They do not experience the same motor disability as adults do when intoxicated,” Nisbet says.

What makes individuals with psychological disorders particularly susceptible to SUDs, according to Nisbet, is that areas of the brain that are affected by psychological disorders are the same areas of the brain that are affected by SUDs. Neurotransmitters, like dopamine, that are involved with SUDs are also involved with major depressive disorder and attention deficit disorder, for instance.

Nisbet emphasizes the importance of integrated care, with psychiatric and primary care practitioners working together to ensure early intervention. While adolescents who are identified as being at high risk of engaging in risk-taking behaviors, they often do not meet the DSM-5 full criteria for SUDs – Nisbet asserts these adolescents are, in fact, at high risk for dangerous consequences, such as intoxicated driving or harming themselves, necessitating substance use screening.

Nisbet now employs the CRAFFT (Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, Trouble – key words in the second section of the assessment tool), a NIDA recommended screening questionnaire for substance use for adolescents presenting with a psychiatric assessment. This series of questions screens for all substances, not just alcohol, and provides an opportunity to start a productive (and preventative) discussion.

Early intervention and education are key to prevention, Nisbet says, because this normalizes the conversations both parents and practitioners can have with their children about
“No matter what population nurses are treating, we need to assess for substance use disorder because it’s a prevalent problem in our society.”

- Patricia Nisbet, DNP, PMHNP-BC

substance use and abuse. She adds that subsequent coordinated and integrated treatment will ensure these adolescents are receiving treatment for both their psychiatric disorder and substance use with improved prognosis.

And, the CRAFFT screening, Nisbet says, can be utilized by advanced practice nurses and RNs alike in a variety of settings.

“No matter what population nurses are treating, we need to assess for substance use disorders because it’s a prevalent problem in our society. It contributes to or is the underlying cause of many psychiatric and medical diagnoses.

“Especially with the current opioid and opiate crisis in the U.S., and the ‘slippery slope’ that is substance abuse, it is even more vital for nurses to be aware of substance use issues, particularly among vulnerable adolescents,” explains Nisbet. “They’re looking for that ‘high adventure’ and like to take risks, so it is very important to be vigilant about what is happening in their lives regarding substance use. As nurses, we have the skills and opportunity to arm adolescents and their parents with the tools and the knowledge to keep themselves healthy.”
RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Sharon Hewner, PhD, RN; Sabrina Casucci, PhD
TITLE
Informatics Models for the Health Management of Home Care Patients with Chronic Diseases
FUNDING SOURCE
3E/HomeBASE

Andrew B. Symons, MD, MS (project director); Medical School (students), Dept. of Family Medicine (residents), Div. of General Internal Medicine (residents), Nursing School (Sharon Hewner, PhD, RN; NP/BS students)
TITLE
The Buffalo Interprofessional Advanced Primary Care Training Program
FUNDING SOURCE
HRSA

Susan Grinstead, PhD RN, PHCN-BC, (PI); Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF, project manager; Theresa Winkelmaier, MS, RN, CPNP; Linda Steeg, DNP, RN, ANP-BC; Penelope McDonald, PhD, RN
TITLE
Does Innovative Use of the KWLA+R® and a Flipped Classroom Influence Achievement of Program Outcomes and “Think Like a Nurse” in a Baccalaureate Nursing Education Program?
FUNDING SOURCE
UB Center for Educational Innovation

Carla Jungquist, PhD, ANP-BC
TITLE
Opioid Induced Respiratory Depression: Predicting and Monitoring Innovation
FUNDING SOURCE
Patricia H. Garman Behavioral Health Nursing Endowment Fund

Suzanne Dickerson, PhD,
TITLE
Transitioning CPAP Self-Management Program Self-Monitoring Module to an Interactive Website for Newly Diagnosed Persons with Sleep Apnea
FUNDING SOURCE
Patricia H. Garman Behavioral Health Nursing Endowment Fund

Sharon Hewner, PhD, RN
TITLE
Internet-Based Psychoeducation to Promote Initial Breast Cancer Adjustment
FUNDING SOURCE
ACS and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo – Mioducki Fund; Jean Kimber Brown Faculty Scholar Grant

Robin Lally, PhD, RN
TITLE
Exploring Barriers to Care Continuity During Transitions: A Mixed-Methods Study to Identify Health Information Exchange Opportunities
FUNDING SOURCE
IMPACT

Carla Jungquist, PhD, ANP-BC
TITLE
Opioid Induced Respiratory Depression: Predicting and Monitoring Innovation
FUNDING SOURCE
Patricia H. Garman Behavioral Health Nursing Endowment Fund
Bruce R. Troen, MD (Co-PI); Kinga Szigel, MD, PhD (Co-PI); Daniel Morelli, MD (Co-I); Steven Dubovsky, MD (Co-I); Marsha L. Lewis, PhD, RN, FAAN (Co-I); Linda Steeg, DNP, RN, ANP-BC (Co-I)

Center of Excellence for Alzheimer’s Disease – Western New York

FUNDING SOURCE
NYS Department of Health

Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF; Jennifer Guay, DNP, CNM, RN

What Would the Patient Say? Patient Satisfaction with Nursing Care during a Simulation Experience

FUNDING SOURCE
Patricia H. Garman Behavioral Health Nursing Endowment Fund

Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF

Safe Sleep Baby

FUNDING SOURCE
Sisters Hospital Foundation

Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF

Evaluation of an Evidence-Based Safe Sleep Teaching Program

FUNDING SOURCE
AACN/CDC Academic Partnership Project

Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF

Evaluation of Safe Sleep Video App for Population Health Education

FUNDING SOURCE
AACN/CDC Academic Partnership Project

Darryl Somayaji, PhD, RN, CNS, CCRC

Promoting a Program of Cancer Survivorship Community-Based Research: A Mentored Research Fellowship

FUNDING SOURCE
CEPP

Cynthia Stuhlmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN; Barry Tolchard, PhD, RN

Health Outcomes of the University of New England, Australia/Coledale Student-Led Clinic

FUNDING SOURCE
The Commonwealth of Australia through New South Wales Health Department
New Faculty

Kristine Faust, DNAP, MBA, RN, CRNA, joins the UB SON as the director of the Nurse Anesthetist Program. Faust has vast clinical experience as a certified registered nurse anesthetist and a teacher and mentor to CRNA students, with research interests in the areas of pediatric anesthesia and anesthesia for children with congenital heart disease. Faust is passionate about legislative issues surrounding patient advocacy and health care delivery and is a member of member of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists and the Society for Pediatric Anesthesia.

Linda Paine Hughes, DNP, RN, NPP-BC, FNP-C, ANP, PNP, is an alumna who joins the school as a clinical assistant professor. Her areas of interest include health care providers’ perceptions of adolescent perinatal depression and risk factor screening tools and treatment strategies for perinatal depression in adolescents.

Vadim Korogoda, DNP, RN, CRNA, is an alumnus joining the school as a clinical assistant professor in the Nurse Anesthetist Program. His areas of interest include simulation and anesthesia simulation for dental students to aid with career discernment.

Margaret Moss, PhD, JD, RN, FAAN, joins the SON as an associate professor in the newly established role of assistant dean for diversity and inclusion. Renowned as an expert in health care issues involving American Indians and elder care, she possesses a broad range of leadership, public policy and legislative experience, including having served on the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, focusing on legislative/policy issues facing our aging population.

Loralee Sessanna, DNS, RN, CNS, AHN-BC, is an alumna joining the school as a clinical associate professor. Her areas of interest include spirituality, holistic nursing and patient care, and end-of-life care.

Cynthia Stuhmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, is the dean for academic innovations and community engagement at the SON. The Buffalo native has a plethora of experience in academic, industry and community settings across the globe. With a background in program development and evaluation, she is positioned to lead the growth of clinical and multicultural collaborations in our community and to play a significant role in expanding our global initiatives.

Barry Tolchard, PhD, RN, joins the school as an associate professor with a program of research in gambling addiction, cognitive behavior therapy, and chronic disease and guided self-help. Tolchard is widely published, including a recent analysis of risk factors for problem gambling in the Journal of Gambling Studies. Tolchard earned his doctorate from the University of Essex (United Kingdom).

Susan Zannoni, DNP, RN, PMHNP, is an alumna of the UB SON joining the faculty as a clinical assistant professor. Her areas of interest include psychiatric and mental health nursing. Zannoni was the recipient of several awards and honors while a student at UB, including the Coletta A. Klug Award (2015).

New Staff

Gary Mahon, MBA, joins the UB SON as CFO and associate dean for administrative services. His more than 20 years of experience in financial management, coupled with his experience in human resource management, facilities planning, and utilizing data and technology to increase organizational productivity and capacity, positions him to provide leadership and vision as we enhance our strategic goals.
Laura Anderson, PhD, assistant professor, licensed psychologist, has been chosen to be one of three recipients of the 2016 President Emeritus and Mrs. Meyerson Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching and Mentoring.

Tammy Austin-Ketch, PhD, RN, FNP-C, FAANP, assistant dean for MS/DNP programs, clinical professor, was named the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year for Education in September 2015. Austin-Ketch was also awarded the UB SON Distinguished Mentor Award.

Jessica Castner, PhD, RN, FAEN, assistant professor, is one of three recipients of the Heilbrunn Nurse Scholar Award.

Yu-Ping Chang, PhD, RN, FGSA, associate professor, was named interim dean for research and scholarship.

Robert Cenczyk, PhD, interim director of academic operations and assessment, earned his doctorate from the UB Graduate School of Education.

Diane Dempsey, grants manager at the SON’s Center for Nursing Research, is now a Certified Research Administrator (CRA), earned through the Research Administrators Certification Council.

Linda Paine Hughes, DNP, RN, NPP-BC, FNP-C, ANP, PNP, clinical assistant professor, earned her DNP in September 2015.

Deborah Raines, PhD, EdS, RN, ANEF, associate professor, is the recipient of the 2016 ELSIE Award for Excellence in Clinical Education from Elsevier.

Min Zhang, PhD, came to the SON as a visiting scholar from the Nursing College at Beihua University, China. With a research interest in older adults and community health, Zhang worked with Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship Yu-Ping Chang on mining and analyzing nursing home data.
Holding a joint appointment as a post-doctoral associate in the Schools of Nursing and Engineering is a first at UB. You may be thinking, “Nursing and engineering – how does that work?”

If you ask Sabrina Casucci, she would answer, “Quite well!”

Casucci, an engineer with a wealth of professional experiences in industry, received a BS in materials science and engineering from Purdue University and an MBA from UB. After years in the engineering field, she returned to UB, earning her PhD in industrial and systems engineering (ISE) in 2015. With interests in consumer health informatics, health care quality and assessment methods, Casucci’s engineering background, specifically in quality improvement, is a perfect fit for both schools.

Her work at Greatbatch Medical, a medical device and components company, was the impetus driving her move toward collaborating with the end users of products she previously helped create and test – a partnership that allows her to integrate science and technology with nursing research to develop practical applications that impact patient care.

Casucci is working with Sharon Hewner, PhD, RN, assistant professor at the School of Nursing, and Li Lin, PhD, professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of ISE, to focus on managing and interpreting big data in health care to improve patient outcomes. With Hewner’s expertise in informatics and health outcomes research and Lin’s proficiency in health care systems, the team is focusing on readmission risk, specifically in those receiving home care services after discharge. Casucci notes, “Currently we do not know the effectiveness of the activities we are providing patients in reducing readmission and/or ED visits, which is the ultimate goal of these interventions.”

Combining engineering and nursing research, Casucci says, is a natural fit. While nurses adjust and improvise using tools available in their work setting, engineers look to optimize tools by observing the end users’ interactions with technology, allowing them to respond to the needs of health care providers and create better, safer technology.

Ultimately, nurses and engineers work to achieve the same result – to improve standards of care. And, Casucci says, “I am exactly where I want to be!”

She hopes to build an academic career at the intersection of industrial engineering and nursing, bridging the gap while working with an interprofessional team to explore processes to improve patient safety.
Yvonne Scherer, EdD, CNS, Associate Professor
Scherer has retired after 37 years of service to the UB School of Nursing. Scherer served as the Adult-Gerontology CNS program coordinator and taught and mentored graduate students throughout her tenure. Her expertise in the use of simulation for instruction gained university-wide recognition and earned her the position of chair of the UB Interprofessional Simulation Steering Committee. Additionally, she served as simulation coordinator on a $1.2 million HRSA grant to enhance the oral-systemic education of both nursing and dental students, evaluating their clinical knowledge, skills and attitudes towards oral-systemic health as well as interprofessional collaborative practice. Scherer has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles and is the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2008; Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching and the UB Teaching Innovation Award in 2009; March of Dimes Nurse Educator Award in 2014; and UB Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring Award in 2015.

Marianne Messina
Messina has retired after 39 years of service to New York State, including positions at the Departments of Environmental Conservation, Mental Health, and Youth Services. She has spent the last 22 years at UB School of Nursing as a valuable member of our support staff.

Thank You!
We thank them both for their years of dedication to the School of Nursing and wish them much continued happiness in their next chapter.

Maureen Kelly, MS, RN, OCN, NEA-BC
A special thank you to a dear friend and steadfast community partner of the School of Nursing, Maureen Kelly, who has retired from her position as the Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President for Patient Care Services at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. We wish her well as she moves to the next phase of her already extraordinary career in nursing.

School of Nursing by the NUM8ERS:

7,000+ ALUMNI
260 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
210 GRADUATE STUDENTS
56 FACULTY & 43 FULL TIME 13 ADJUNCT
Becoming a culturally-competent, globally-minded health care professional can begin anywhere – for 10 nursing undergraduates and 30 dental students from UB, a school in Cookeville, Tennessee, served as the backdrop for an eye-opening, hands-on lesson about the realities of health care access in their own country.

Right here in the U.S. many people live in areas with little or no access to basic medical care. The Remote Area Medical (RAM) program offers an opportunity for those in isolated and underserved areas to receive health care in a mobile clinic setting. And, it offers students an opportunity to make a real-world impact.

“One of the reasons I decided to go to nursing school was to give something tangible to society,” explains Regan Howlett, BS ’16. “I want to regularly do service work, and getting involved with RAM, with an organization that does meaningful work, was a great way to start.”

Cookeville, Tennessee, is a rural, impoverished area of 30,000 residents located 80 miles outside of Nashville. The mobile clinic offered general medical, dental, vision and preventive services and education to those in desperate need of care. The students began each day at 5:30 a.m. as they, along with other volunteers, gathered vital signs and health histories for over 800 patients, some who waited in line for days to be seen at the mobile clinic.

Educating patients on how oral health affects systemic health and the benefits of tobacco cessation was an important role for the students, along with assisting during dental procedures, passing surgical instruments, suctioning and often providing reassurance to apprehensive patients. Lack of access and inability to pay were the main reasons people travelled from miles around seeking health care.

“I was surprised by how many people knew they needed their teeth pulled but hadn’t been able to get to a dentist to have it done,” says Jillian Barry, BS ’16. “They said that the local dentists had to have [them] come in for multiple appointments, paying each time of course, before they would simply extract teeth. And, after extractions, implants and dentures are not cheap, often times not covered by their insurance. So if you got your whole mouth pulled, that was it – no more teeth. It’s a sad state of affairs, but an all too common one.”

Linda Paine Hughes, DNP, RN, NPP-BC, FNP-C, ANP, PNP; Susan Nierenberg, PhD, RN; and Molli Warunek, DNP, FNP-C, RN, all faculty at UB School of Nursing, accompanied the students. Nierenberg was proud to see students step into a new role and embrace it: “The RAM trip offers our students an opportunity to provide vital treatment and education to people who suffer as a result of inequitable access to care.” In addition to offering this experience to seniors in the future, consideration may be given to DNP students as well.

“I whole-heartedly recommend this experience to other nursing students,” Barry says, “because you get to dig deeper into the picture of community health – the people we treat in hospitals often suffer from multiple, interwoven problems. Even knowing the problems are connected, we are forced to ignore other issues in the face of their ‘chief complaint.’ Hospitals are meant for those who are too sick to be taken care of in the community. But once we send them back out, what support do they have?

“Primary care providers often do not have the time to spend educating, and the public often doesn’t know what to ask. It’s a lose-lose. That is why nurses in community health settings are so important. We are the stop-gap – the educators, advocates and sentries guarding the health and lives of those we care for. We have the knowledge and power to fight for care of the whole person and we can empower people to take their health into their own hands. That’s what these clinics are about.”

– Sarah Goldthrite, Donna A. Tyrpak

“We are the stop-gap – the educators, advocates and sentries guarding the health and lives of those we care for.”

– Jillian Barry, BS ’16
While some students took much needed time off during the winter break to regroup and prepare for the next semester, two members of the Multicultural Nursing Student Association (MNSA) seized the opportunity to volunteer abroad during this treasured free time.

Each year the MNSA organizes a student led volunteer trip. Rebecca Bittman, BS ’16, a senior at the time, and Alexander Salinas, the incoming president of the MNSA, embarked on a seven day adventure, traveling by “chicken bus … down a steep mountain road” to volunteer at a government-run clinic in the small town in Magdalena, Guatemala.

Through International Volunteer HQ, a travel company that places volunteers in host communities under the supervision of local health care providers, they – along with nursing students from a host of states and several foreign countries, including Australia, Canada and Italy – gained hands-on experience working with local doctors and nurses providing basic health care to those in desperate need.

Assisting with histories and physical exams, wound care, vaccinating children and adults, drawing blood, and providing patient education in a maternity and pediatric clinic, the students were surprised to see children with common childhood diseases that are rarely seen in the U.S. because of the availability of required vaccinations.

“Exposure to patients who lack access to health care … brings a greater sense of how socio-economic factors play a role in one’s health,” says Salinas. He notes that cultural practices and beliefs also significantly influence the patient and care, so he was conscious of keeping an open mind.

Salinas plans to return next winter and encourages others with an interest in health disparities to consider seeking out an experience such as this to broaden their understanding of nursing practice in other parts of the world.

– Donna A. Tyrpak

The Helene Fuld Health Trust Scholarship Fund – established by Dr. Leonhard Felix Fuld and his sister, Florentine, in their mother’s memory – assists nursing students as they prepare for careers in an increasingly complex health care field.

This past year, our Fuld scholars took advantage of some of the many rich experiences available outside the classroom to enhance their educational preparation. Sarah Dow and Catherine Glawatz were chosen to participate in the newly created nurse internship program at Hospice Buffalo, while Michael Victor and Khloe Barlow were selected for the Nursing Undergraduate Research Summer Experience NURSE program, offering exposure to high caliber research with faculty mentors. Other enriching opportunities included providing health screenings for the Million Hearts® initiative at community locations and UB on the Green this past summer, in addition to various volunteer opportunities in hospitals and health clinics in the community.
The carved remnants of a past, but not forgotten, civilization bask in the striking midday sun amongst tangles of trees. They climb the cracked stone stairs, an unexpected highway to a breathtaking scene of lush green below a sparkling azure sky, streaked with stratus clouds, to rest upon something holy – to gaze across a giving land that will gift them with knowledge more powerful than they could ever dream of gleaning from bound pages.

This is Xunantunich, a Mayan ceremonial center – and, no, these are not students of archaeology. These are UB School of Nursing students, and they are discovering skills they will carry with them for a lifetime: cultural competence, advocacy, collaboration, communication, ethical decision-making. Their teachers? The Belizean people. And their team.

For the third winter intersession in a row, students travelled to Belize as part of the Community Engagement Across Populations course, this year accompanied by Clinical Assistant Professor Jennifer Guay, and worked alongside the UB School of Pharmacy and International Service Learning, a non-governmental organization that offers volunteer opportunities in developing communities. A Pace University nursing student also joined the group on its journey.

The team visited villages in need of basic medical care – Santa Familia and Blackman Eddy – and, without access to technologies they have grown accustomed to, discovered how truly valuable their analytical and critical thinking skills are in translating knowledge to action.

“We did not have access to medical health records, blood testing, chest X-rays or any other diagnostic testing,” says Jeanette Davis, now a senior in the traditional baccalaureate of nursing program. “This made me think more critically about my patients and rely on my knowledge, rather than technology, for an answer. It changed the way I interact and engage with my patients – and it allowed me to see my patient as a whole person.”

The team trekked down dusty dirt paths for home visits; they worked diligently to prepare teaching materials and set up medical clinics.

“Students checked heights/weights and vital signs, as well as patient histories and physicals,” Guay explains. “There was no privacy at the medical evaluation stations in either community – patients and students sat on church benches or chairs and were separated from other student teams and patients by only a few feet, so care had to be taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality.”

The team treated 143 patients for a range of conditions, from hypertension and diabetes to viruses, common colds, and parasites in these areas with temporary housing and a poor water supply.

One student described her experience as humbling – all of the students were energized by the generosity and hospitality of the kind people they met during their five days in the villages, and by the insight they gained there.

“I truly realized that the best source of information does not come from an electronic medical record; it comes from the patient,” reflects Davis. “Listening to and communicating with your patient and establishing trust is absolutely vital to providing the very best care.”

And these students can carry with them this knowledge wherever they may go as professionals, whether they are travelling down an unpaved path in Mesoamerica, or across the blacktop surrounding them.

-Sarah Goldthrite

The School of Nursing lost a good friend this past year, Glen Gresham, MD, chair and professor emeritus, UB rehabilitation medicine. The late Dr. Gresham and his wife Phyllis Gresham, RN, MS ’85, established the Glen E. and Phyllis K. Gresham endowment to support the high priority needs of the UB SON. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude for their philanthropy, which for the past several years has provided several students the opportunity to participate in the Belize Service Learning experience.
Taking the Bull by the Horns
SON Undergraduate Research Poster Selected for SURC

William Waller III, a 2016 graduate of the BS in nursing program and a 2014 BS graduate of the Jacobs School of Medicine with a major in pharmacology and toxicology, presented his research at the SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference (SURC) at SUNY Cobleskill in April – a proud accomplishment for an undergraduate researcher and for the School of Nursing.

The study, entitled “Exploring Barriers to Care Continuity During Transitions,” aimed to identify hospitals’ methods for safely discharging patients – a process that is vital to optimal patient care. “Gaps in care continuity can negatively impact patient outcomes following hospital discharge,” Waller explains. “By improving patients’ transitions home from the hospital, we can reduce or eliminate preventable readmissions that are caused by gaps in care continuity.”

Waller, who worked with Assistant Professor Sharon Hewner and Post-Doctoral Associate Sabrina Casucci on the study, was hired as a research assistant by Hewner when he first entered the School of Nursing. He started out in Buffalo-area hospitals performing direct observations and compiling field notes – eventually, he helped to generate process maps and collaborated on a research poster that, impressively, has been presented at three events.

“Opportunities like SURC are important for nursing students – they help to remind us that we will not be practicing in a vacuum,” says Waller.

He is also very mindful of the ways nursing students can benefit and grow as professionals by establishing relationships and acquiring diverse experiences. “I gained very valuable insights into the important role that nurse researchers play in our overall health care system,” explains Waller. “The time that I spent working on this research project allowed me to experience a different aspect of the nursing profession. I felt that working so closely with Dr. Hewner allowed me to develop a long-term, professional relationship with a faculty member. Dr. Hewner was my boss, advisor, coach, and supporter – and she was able to challenge me to reach my goals and develop independence.”

Waller understands the magnitude of the impact of nursing researchers working beyond the bedside – inside and outside clinical settings, the new knowledge procured by these researchers directly impacts patient health and outcomes.

“There is more to the nursing profession than the floor or facility where we will find ourselves after school, and research conferences are a place where participants can go to feel energized and encouraged by the collective progress made by the dedicated researchers that will shape our profession in the future.”

-Sarah Goldthrite

Dedicated to Excellence in Education:
Expanding Our DEU Model

Clinical experiences in labor and delivery, intensive care, postoperative care and hospice have now been added to the growing number of Dedicated Education Units (DEU) available to undergraduate students at the School of Nursing.

The School of Nursing recently added three new sites in Western New York to its DEU program, a partnership with local hospitals, hospices and medical centers to provide students with clinical experiences and mentorship from staff nurses. The new specialized DEUs add to an extensive list of areas in which nursing students can now gain practical experience, including pediatrics, labor and delivery, and obstetrics.

The new sites include:
• Labor and delivery DEU at Sisters of Charity Hospital.
• Intensive care unit DEU at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo.
• Postoperative care and hospice DEU at Sisters of Charity Hospital.

Piloted in 2008 with four units at Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) and the now closed Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital, the additions expand the program to 16 DEU sites across the Catholic Health System, Kaleida Health, ECMC, Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Hospice of Buffalo.

With nursing students finding the transition to their first jobs challenging, the DEU offers the hands-on experience that is vital to educating the next generation of nurses.

“The DEU helps students develop the early confidence and competence they need to succeed in a professional role. It gives them the opportunity to fully integrate what they’re learning within the classroom in the clinical practice, improves their clinical thinking and their ability to make sound clinical judgments related to patient care,” says Susan Grinslade, assistant dean for undergraduate programs in the nursing school.

In the DEU, staff nurses are the instructors, while faculty assist in a support role. The students and nurses share assignments, allowing students to learn, nursing staff to sharpen their skills as mentors, and faculty to remain grounded in clinical reality.

- Marcene Robinson

Carleara Ferreira da Rosa Silva, RN, MS, a third year doctoral student at the UB School of Nursing, served as the general director for the inaugural Brazilian Graduate Students Conference (BRASCON). This conference, completely organized by graduate students, was the first conference for Brazilian graduate students in American Universities. The primary focus was to promote activities to enable integration, communication and professional development for students within the research fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The conference events held at Harvard University featured several notable keynote speakers, as well as poster and podium presentations by student participants and a career fair.
Kathleen Barrett (DNP ’16) and Jaclyn Szymanski (BS ’15) received the Dr. S. Mouchly Small Award, which recognizes graduating students who have demonstrated superior knowledge and skill in psychiatric mental health nursing and who exhibit an understanding of and sensitivity to the special needs of clients and their families, as well as the ability to respond to these needs.

Jillian Barry (BS ’16) received the annual Ethan Christian ’12 Memorial Award, which honors an outstanding University at Buffalo nursing student at graduation in memory of Ethan Christian, BS ’12. The recipient demonstrates exceptional care, compassion and excellence in the practice of nursing as exemplified by Ethan Christian.

Jillian Barry (BS ’16) received the 2016 American Nurses Association NY Future Nurse Leader Award. This award honors nursing students who are entering the profession and encourages them to continue developing their leadership skills as RNs.

Nicole Bonito (DNP ’16), Marissa El Hawa (BS ’16) and Ellen Tilt (BS ’16) received the Anne Walker Sengbusch Award for Leadership in School and Community Activities for notable service and leadership to the UB SON, university and/or community.

Jolyn Chang (DNP ’16, BS ’11) and Sarah Barclay (BS ’16) received the Shirley D. DeVoe Nursing Award for Excellence in Communication. This award, endowed by UB SON alumna Shirley DeVoe, is presented to graduating students who demonstrated superior skills in communicating with clients.

Jeffrey Gaulrapp (BS ’16) received the Ruth T. McGrorey Award for Excellence in Nursing. Named to honor UB SON’s former dean, the award recognizes baccalaureate students who have demonstrated outstanding knowledge of nursing theory and excellence in nursing practice.

Kara Hedman (PhD ’16) and Santhiny Rajamahone (PhD ’16) received the Ruth Gale Elder Award for Excellence in Nursing Research. This award, established by Elder, faculty emeritus, recognizes graduate students who have demonstrated outstanding knowledge and ability in nursing research.

Kara Hedman (DNP ’16) and William Waller III (BS ’16) received the Sigma Theta Tau, Gamma Kappa Chapter Award recognizing their superior scholarship, leadership and achievement in nursing.

Other Awards

Christine Geiger (DNP student) received a scholarship award from the Nurse Practitioner Association in May 2016.

Alexander Salinas (Traditional BS student) received the UB Campus Impact Award in 2015 at the Pillars Ceremony.

William Waller III (BS ’16) received the UB Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Research, Scholarship and Creativity, recognizing outstanding contributions from each decanal area that achieve superiority in presentation, content and scope.
When Thomas Radel graduated from UB SON in 1985 with a master’s in nurse anesthesia, his daughters were but a twinkle in his eye—he had no way of knowing that they, and their big brother Michael, would one day follow in his footsteps, after first navigating their own unique course.

AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT: CATHERINE

Catherine Glawatz’s path to nursing revealed itself early on, though she had other plans. “An assessment in high school pegged me as a health care worker,” Catherine recalls, “but I wanted to get married and stay home with my babies.”

While her boyfriend, now husband, was in college, she decided to, in the meantime, direct that love for children toward pursuing an associate's in child development. Then, when fertility issues arose for the couple after they got married, Catherine realized the incredible impact nurses have on peoples’ lives.

“What a powerful job [nurses] have, that in such a hard, confusing time they could make me feel so much better. That’s when I realized nursing was really my calling,” she explains of her new path. “I saw the impact of nursing in fertility and every other aspect of medicine, so while trying to get pregnant, I started taking prerequisites for the program.”

As fate would have it, Catherine got pregnant with her son when she finished her prerequisites. She is currently a traditional BS student (and very proud mom!) expected to graduate in May 2017.

AN INWARD REFLECTION: MONICA

Like her sister, Monica Radel took a sort of indirect path to nursing, working in customer service after earning her master’s degree in communication and leadership. Also like her sister, she was passionate about caring for and interacting with people—a passion that led her to work as an aid at a memory care facility, and to the realization that she wanted something more hands on than a desk job.

“I had never really worked with people in that capacity before, but from the beginning I really loved it,” Monica beams. “I loved the ability to establish that connection with people and their family during their hardest time, so nursing was a logical step—I made the switch when I realized I wanted to have a more direct, positive effect on peoples’ lives.

So Monica, who her family lovingly jokes is a “career student,” forged forward, earning her BS in nursing in May 2016 through the ABS program.

IN THEIR BLOOD: FAMILY VALUES

Ironically, the sisters’ father also took an indirect path to nursing, first earning a degree in mathematics and becoming a teacher before a nurse anesthetist. Seeing his daughters and son land in nursing, they say, has made him incredibly proud. It has also provided the siblings with an intricate support network—and with the knowledge of the value of mutual support among nurses.

“We have a group text message between the two of us and our brother and dad—we share what we learned that day or ask questions,” Monica says as she turns to Catherine, and both share a laugh. “Sometimes, we might be looking for a quick answer, but we usually get diagrams.”

“We’re also really lucky because our mom is an EMT and was a volunteer firefighter—she and our dad both went on medical missions, so they can relate to that emotional and difficult side of care,” Catherine adds. “And, our maternal grandmother and an aunt are both nurses.”

“I have also never experienced friendships quite like the ones I have with other nursing students,” Monica says. “I think having that support on this path is so important to thriving in this field.

“It’s really important for us to do what our dad and brother did—make a model of nursing that is beyond what people see or typically imagine. We want to set an example, to highlight all of the opportunities it can provide—we want to show the true impact nurses have in the community.”

The siblings are well on their way to achieving this—and they can thank their family for that—not just their parents, siblings and significant others, but also their brand new extended family of nurses.
1. What is your favorite memory of UB?
I love that feeling of being part of something bigger. The comradery among the nursing students, especially, really drew me. We had these diverse study groups with younger students and older students who ranged in age from 18 or 20 to about 40, so I learned many different ways to approach nursing issues. We studied together, and we had a lot of fun together.

2. What inspired you to become UBAA president?
I’ve always gravitated toward leadership positions — PTA president, Brownie leader, Cub Scout leader – I was president of my nursing class at 18. I’ve also been a part of some wonderful organizations – Leukemia Society, American Cancer Society, and I was president of the national Oncology Nursing Society – I’m always in some kind of leadership role.

3. What is the biggest challenge you face as UBAA president?
Now that we’re a non-dues membership organization, instead of representing 10,000 people like we used to, I now have the awesome responsibility and opportunity of representing almost 243,000 alumni. There’s power in numbers – I need to do a great job for all of the people I represent.

4. What are some of the unique challenges that come with representing 243,000 people?
My goal is to educate, motivate and inspire people to feel good about the University – and to give back through volunteer work and philanthropy. I represent many different decades of alumni from across the disciplines – to reach all of these different groups is a challenge. I really love UB and what it has done for me personally, what it does for students, what it does for WNY, and that it has a global reach, which is something we should be really proud of. I would like to make 243,000 alumni feel proud of our school. Can I do that? Not by myself, but I have a lot of help from a lot of great people.

5. Why is it important for nurses to stay connected/engaged?
It’s important for them to understand that nursing is not an entity in and of itself. It’s integrated with other health care professions and with the rest of the health care culture. Nurses can sometimes isolate themselves, and I think we need to always broaden our perspective – we can do that at UB by coming to events, social and scholarly. Seeing some of the great speakers who come here, for example, is a great opportunity to interact with and learn from others in related fields.

6. What do you think makes a good nurse leader?
Being inclusive is important – it’s not necessary to have all of the experiences of the people you’re representing or serving, but it’s helpful to have some of those experiences. A nurse leader should be able to mentor other nurses and provide suggestions in a way that helps people become better, not make them feel bad about themselves – surround yourself with people who are good at listening to different points of view.

7. Advice for nursing students who want to pursue leadership positions in or outside of nursing?
Get involved in any organization you are passionate about. Join a committee, do volunteer work, pursue leadership positions. Think about what you want to accomplish. Connect with all of the people, understand them, let them know what you’re about, listen to who they are and what they want. Each person brings something different and special to the leadership arena. We’ve had executive directors who are extroverted, executive directors who are business people who lay out goals and strategies, we’ve had presidents who are funny – that’s just not me though [laughs] – and we’ve had presidents like me who really like to engage. Truly I do appreciate what people bring to this University. I love to meet people and thank them.

More About Mary Garlick Roll:
HOMETOWN: Williamsville, NY
HOBBIES: Former marathon runner who qualified to run the Boston Marathon | biking, lifting, Pilates | listening to music
SONG: Wonderful Tonight by Eric Clapton
MOVIE: Blade Runner
TV SHOWS: Blue Bloods, Madam Secretary
BOOK: Me Before You by Jojo Moyes
After two semesters at UB contemplating a career in journalism, Meghan Underhill, PhD, FNP, RN, AOCNS, decided to chart a different course and become a nurse. This pivotal moment led the Western New York native to pursue her undergraduate and postgraduate education at the UB SON, where her doctoral research explored the lived experience of having hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndrome in women with no cancer diagnosis. UB was her top choice based on its excellent academic reputation.

Underhill’s scholastic preparation led her to a coveted post-doctoral research fellowship at the prestigious Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI) and ultimately a position at the Phyllis F. Cantor Center for Research in Nursing and Patient Care Services at DFCI.

While each step of her academic education was met with thoughtful consideration of the path on which she would embark, Underhill is quick to credit UB faculty and alumni for their steadfast encouragement. Initially, a spark ignited after completing her undergraduate studies – she became fascinated by the family as a unit and set out to become a family nurse practitioner. Having accomplished that milestone, and with reinforcement from SON faculty like Tammy Austin-Ketch and Nancy Campbell-Heider, she thrived in clinical research.

During Underhill’s FNP program, an alumna and now adjunct faculty member of the school, Carolyn Farrell, PhD, MS, RN, WHNP-BC, CGC, presented a lecture on clinical genetics – this experience led her to pursue a clinical practicum in cancer genetics with Farrell and her genetics team at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. And, it solidified her desire to further her education, with Underhill recalling, “The questions I had clinically about patient care in genetics fueled my desire to pursue a PhD in nursing.”

This thirst for knowledge stemmed from her desire to possess the ability to answer her patients’ questions about risk and decision making: “At every level [of my educational trajectory] there was a mentor who was an expert in the field to guide me and help me advance my knowledge, so I stayed [at UB]. The mentorship was key.”

Underhill’s future is coming into focus as a rising star in the area of survivorship issues for those with hereditary cancers. When asked if she is surprised about the direction of her career, she confides that while not planning to solely conduct research, she has learned much from working on a multidisciplinary team in a clinical research setting. Her work provides the opportunity to mentor students and fellows, fulfilling her passion to teach. She craves more patient interaction, noting of the future, “Ultimately, as a nurse scientist, my goal is to improve patient care through patient-centered interventions that can be adopted as evidence-based practice in hereditary cancer in a variety of settings.”

Additionally, she hopes to focus on developing mechanisms to support health care providers caring for patients with cancer so that they can feel confident and informed in order to guide patients toward the best choices for their individual needs.

Her advice to students on advancing their education? “All of my experiences were valuable, but if I could go back and do it over, I would become more involved in the community outside of the profession while still a student.”

- Donna A. Tyrpak
1950s

Mary L. Lorich (BS ’59) was honored at an awards dinner for outstanding alumni of the St. Francis of Assisi Church School in Tonawanda, N.Y. The award is presented to St. Francis School alumni for leadership, career achievements, community involvement and contributions to society.

1970s

Juanita K. Hunter (MS ’74), a nurse, educator, author and the first African American to serve as president of the New York State Nurses Association, received the Community Leader Award from the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York on January 27, 2016. Hunter also holds a BS (’71) from the UB School of Social Work and an EdD (’83) from UB Graduate School of Education.

Carol A. Latona (BS ’76) was promoted from director of medical/surgical nursing to director of nursing operations at Catholic Health, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, where she will provide leadership oversight for nurse staffing, workload and scheduling. Latona also earned an MBA from UB in 1995.

Deborah Bruch Bucki (MS ’78) was elected to Amherst Town Board in November 2015. She was endorsed by Democratic, Conservative and Working Families parties. Bruch Bucki also holds a PhD in sociology from UB (’98).

Shirley Duane (BS ’78) was honored as the Nurse of Distinction at the Mercy Hospital Foundation’s 7th Annual Autumn Ball in November 2015.

1980s

LuAnne Brown (MS ’88) was named CEO at the Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network six months after joining the organization on an interim basis.

Dianne Morrison-Beedy (MS ’83) was named one of eight ambassadors for scientific advancement by Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research. Morrison-Beedy also holds a PhD from the University of Rochester.

S. Elaine Panzica (MS ’85) joined OB/GYN Associates of Western New York as a women’s health nurse practitioner.

Lea Anne Cali (BS ’86) retired as health services director at New Directions Youth and Family Services after 39 years.

1990s

Michael Ackerman (MS ’85, DNS ’91) was named the associate director of Niagara University School of Nursing. Ackerman earned his bachelor’s degree in nursing from NU SON in 1980. He is also the owner of Ackerman Consulting, a health care consulting company.

Eric S. Adamski (BS ’93) was appointed to director of clinical services at Fidelis Care.

Michael D. Fallacaro (MS ’84, DNS ’93) was named a 2015 fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). The induction took place during the academy’s annual meeting on October 17, 2015.

Anastasia Stacey Scime (BS ’95, MS ’98) was promoted to associate chief nurse for inpatient areas at VA Western NY Healthcare System.

GIVING BACK

Donna M. Price, MS ’92, BS ’86, has provided a gift to support a Traditional or Accelerated BS student with a scholarship to assist with tuition for the program. She credits several faculty members, including former dean Bonnie Bullough and emeritus clinical professor Mattie L. Rhodes, EdD, RN, with her success as a nursing professional. Price is currently a nurse case manager for ambulatory specialty clinics at the Erie County Medical Center.

An endowed scholarship was established to honor the memory of Tracey I. Wheeler, RN, a critical care nurse who worked at Sisters of Charity Hospital and attended UB School of Nursing. According to her husband Robert Wheeler, an alumnus of the School of Public Health and Health Professions, Tracey gained the admiration of her patients, their families and her colleagues because of her fervent belief in always treating the person with respect and dignity. He established this fund in hopes that students who benefit from this gift will do the same.

Student scholarships open doors for promising students who are prepared to take on the challenges of rigorous academic preparation. The support not only makes a difference in the lives of the recipients, but it also serves to influence the health and wellness of the communities in which they choose to work in the future. We thank our donors for their generous gifts.
2000s

Chanda Agro (BS ’00, MS ’02) is a nurse practitioner leading the efforts in Niagara Services’ recent partnership with Seneca Gaming Corp. that provides its employees health and wellness benefits.

Martha Bergren (MS ’92, DNS ’03) was presented with the 2015 National Association of School Nurses Outstanding School Nurse Educator Award and the 2015 National Association of School Nurses President’s Recognition Award.

Cindy Buckley (BS ’03) was published in the January/March 2016 issue of the Journal of Christian Nursing. The co-authored article “When Sorrow Never Stops” describes how nurses can assist people experiencing long term bereavement. (doi:10.1097/CNJ.0000000000000231)

Christine Nelson-Tuttle (DNS ’05) won the March of Dimes APRN Nurse of the Year Award September 2015.

Jarrod A. Atkinson (BS ’06), director of critical care services, and Michelle Wild (BS ’06), ICU nurse manager, both of Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, took first place for their research poster, “ICU Wheels Out – Improving Transfer Times Out of the ICU to Med/Surg,” at the 29th Annual Nursing Research & Scholarly Activities Conference, sponsored by the Professional Nurses Association of Western New York.

Sarah Buckley (BS ’06) presented on the impact of short staffing on nurses and care quality at the Lunch & Issues series of the League of Women Voters® of Buffalo Niagara.

Cristina E. Virtuoso (BS ’06, MS ’06), a family nurse practitioner and Niagara Falls native, is now part of the clinical staff at Niagara Falls Memorial’s Summit Family Health Center and Lewiston Primary Care Center. Virtuoso is also a member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

Burgundy Mullen-Dedde (BS ’08) was named senior clinical advisor of perioperative services at Kenmore Mercy Hospital. Mullen-Dedde started at Kenmore Mercy Hospital in 2015 as a staff nurse in the surgical service department.

Nesreen M. Alqaissi (PhD ’09, PMCRT ’09) is the coordinator of a master renal specialty program partnership between De Montfort University in Leicester, England, and United Arab Emirates’ Fatima College of Health Sciences.

2010s

Cheryl Crotser (PhD ’10) is now dean of Roberts-Wesleyan College’s newly formed School of Nursing. She has also served as associate professor, director of the nursing graduate program and chairperson of the department of nursing.

Vivian K. Gerard (BS ’86, MS ’10) is a psychiatric NP at the new and 6th primary care office of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center (start fall ’15). Previously, Gerard served as director of outpatient treatment at Northpointe Council Inc. She also worked for Lakeshore Behavioral Health and the Chautauqua County Department of Mental Health.

Brian Regan (BS ’07, MS ’10) is now a nurse practitioner at Novant Health in Charlotte, North Carolina. Previously, he worked as a nurse practitioner at Catawba-Piedmont Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgery in Rock Hill, South Carolina.
Loretta Ford, internationally-known living nurse legend, treated UB SON faculty, students and guests to a discussion of the evolution of NPs in April.
Carol S. Brewer, PhD, RN, FAAN, Faculty Emeritus (r), was honored with the Patricia H. Garman Award for Excellence. This award is presented in recognition of an individual’s significant support of and impact on the UB SON.

Michael D. Fallacaro, DNS ’93, MS ’84, CRNA, FAAN (l), was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his exceptional career accomplishments, service and scholarly activity.

Theresa M. Betz, MS ’92, BS ’88, FNP-BC (r), was presented with the UB SON Distinguished Preceptor Award in recognition of being an outstanding clinical preceptor for the School of Nursing.

May Celebration Awards
**PROMOTING HEALTH AND REDUCING RISK IN PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**


**PULSE HEALTHY WEIGHT RESEARCH TEAM**


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**BIOBEHAVIORAL ONCOLOGY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

**Austin-Ketch, T., & Bruce, S. A. (2015).** The art and science of polypharmacy in primary care. *American Association of Nurse Practitioners Continuing Education*


Leading Today, Transforming Tomorrow’s Standards of Care

Margaret Moss, PhD, JD, UB SON assistant dean of diversity and inclusion, has edited and published the nation’s first nursing textbook on the health care needs of the United States’ 5 million American Indians: "American Indian Health and Nursing." Moss’ career advocating for diversity in academia and health care delivery systems served as a catalyst for her efforts to address the glaring lack of information about educational disparity and lack of health care access for perhaps the least understood minority population in the nation.

HEALTH SYSTEMS AND DATA SCIENCE


SLEEP RESEARCH


ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS


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The best public universities have the strongest private support.