

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

NURSING

MAGAZINE 2020



A RENEWED FOCUS ON HEALTH, OUTREACH



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dear Texas A&M University College of Nursing Community,

Never in our wildest dreams did we anticipate that 2020, The International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, would challenge us with a global pandemic, bring uncertainty, dynamic change and often overwhelming demands on nursing practice, education and research. This was to be a year of celebrating nursing excellence, past, present and future. Our celebrations were replaced with incredible and very public displays of nursing courage, commitment, resilience and caring.

As we close out the year, it is only fitting that dissemination of the COVID-19 vaccination is beginning, with frontline nurses as some of the first recipients, while others will serve as vaccination champions. Capping off 2020 with this new development is certainly cause for celebration.

This issue of the Texas A&M College of Nursing magazine shares stories of incredible selfless service on the part of our faculty, students and former students. We celebrate new grant funded initiatives that are aligned with our strategic plan of providing accessible quality health care through partnerships with rural and underserved communities and health systems. For example, we have initiated programs that integrate behavioral health and primary care in a nurse-led care delivery model, and provide virtual expert sexual assault nurse consultation to underserved areas of Texas to support teleforensic medical examinations. Community-based partnerships addressing the opioid epidemic are advancing through new federal funding to address this national epidemic with a specific interest in neonatal abstinence syndrome.

We are committed to student success, celebrating student awards and new educational experiences that support excellent clinical education. Our faculty success and accomplishments lead the way for the success of our students and for the outstanding accomplishments of our college this year. National re-accreditation of our bachelor's and master's degree programs as well as national re-designation as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education both took place this year.

As we look forward to 2021, I personally offer my congratulations to our faculty and students, our former students and nurses everywhere, for the courage and compassion expressed this year. We honor you, and we celebrate you! Your work is important.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Fahrenwald". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN
Dean and Professor, College of Nursing



CONTENTS

Introductions

- 2** Retiree to active duty
- 4** Welcoming new faculty

Community practice, partnerships and outreach

- 6** Caring for community
- 8** Combatting opioids

Research

- 10** Serving survivors
- 12** Piloting telemedicine

Education and current students

- 14** Students fast track to graduation
- 16** Adopting virtual patients, patience
- 18** Building a pipeline
- 20** A good catch

Honors and recognitions

- 21** Diversity champion
- 22** Re-accredited by CCNE
- 23** Faculty accolades
- 24** Re-named NLN Center of Excellence
- 25** Nationally ranked MSN program

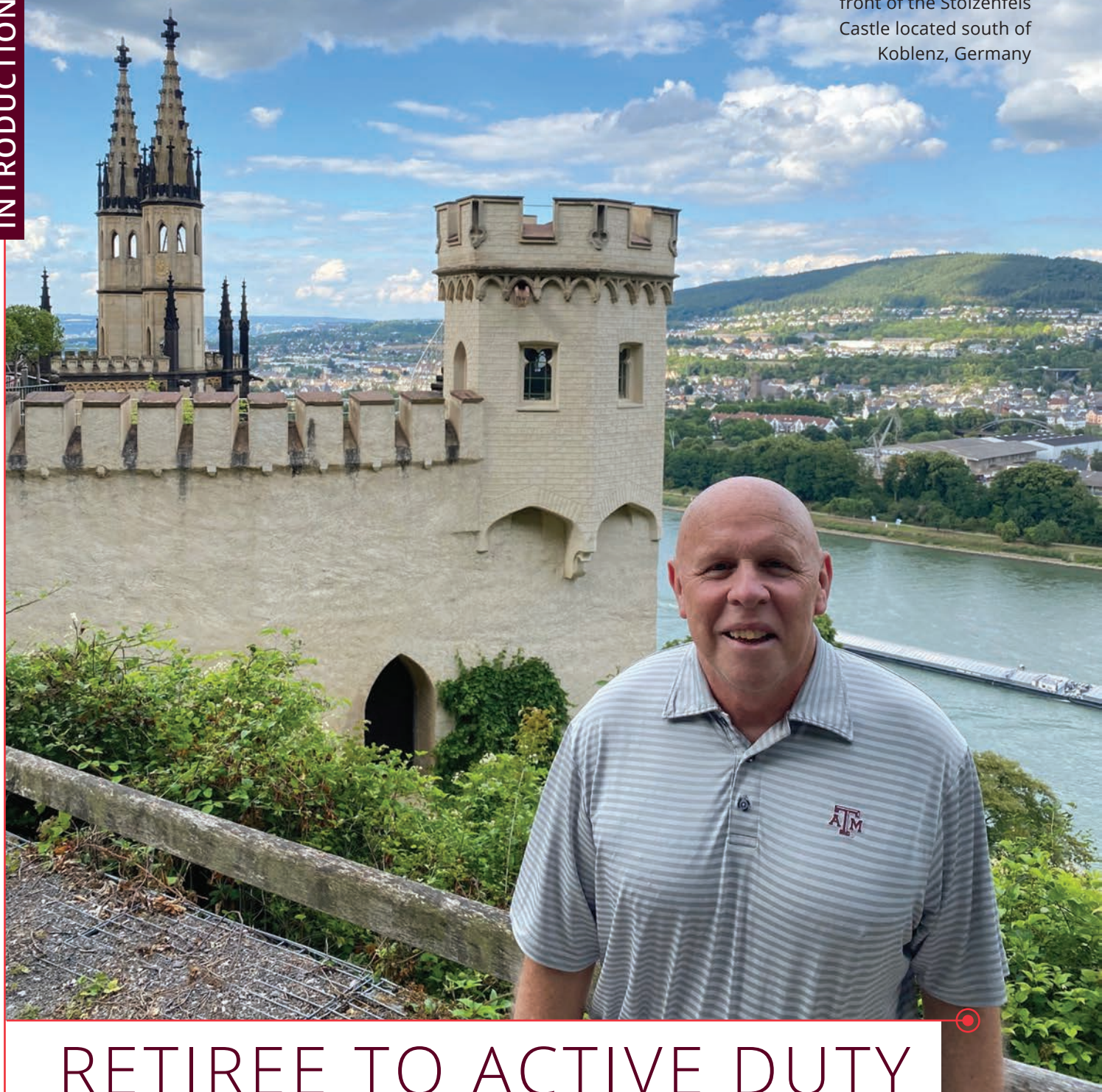
Former students

- 26** Soldier applies passion for serving others

Giving

- 28** Support leaders in nursing

LTC LeRoy Marklund in front of the Stolzenfels Castle located south of Koblenz, Germany



RETIREEE TO ACTIVE DUTY

From agriculture major to military nurse, the last three decades for one professor have consistently offered unexpected challenges and opportunities, and proven that the calling to serve truly never ends. LeRoy Marklund, DNP, MPH, RN, CNS, CCRN, CEN, CNRN, leads undergraduate students in nursing as a clinical assistant professor, a position he has held just short of three years since retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel from the United States Army.

By May 2020, the onset of a global pandemic was imminent and proactive measures to help reduce the impact of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, became a priority. Marklund was voluntarily recalled to active duty in Germany to support fellow nurses serving overseas and increase health care staffing during a time where a nursing shortage was already a reality.

Anyone who spends even just a moment visiting with Marklund can sense his compassion for others, genuine calming nature and commitment to service above self, so it is certainly not surprising that he accepted the invitation to support those in need of his experience overseas. "I was honored to accept the opportunity to serve," said Marklund. "Within a week, the call came and I learned I would be stationed at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany."

For six months, Marklund put his personal and professional life at Texas A&M University on hold and travelled to southwestern Germany where he treated patients at the LPMC, the largest military hospital outside the continental United States. "Once you are a soldier, you are a soldier for life," he said. "Both my boys are [Texas A&M] Aggies and have already graduated so this call meant I was leaving my wife behind to take care of the home front, that fellow faculty would take over my teaching assignments during an already hectic time."

Given the unprecedented situation brought about by COVID-19, it could not be more fitting that 2020 was deemed the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife by the World Health Organization. The pandemic affected every facet of health care including resources, staffing, student clinical experiences and teaching modalities for educators. Marklund was able to offer support in each area serving as the site director for the Clinical Nurse Transition Program (CNTP). He coached and mentored newly assigned Second Lieutenants during clinical simulation hours and more than 560 clinical hours in the medical/surgical, mother/baby and COVID-19 units.

Marklund was also the course director for two preceptor courses and served as an instructor for TeamSTEPPS, empowering more than 150 LPMC employees with effective communication skills and decisive safety processes. Lastly, he initiated Stop the Bleed training where 19 LPMC Hospital Education Division instructors became certified trainers, allowing the course to be taught as part of medical personnel and non-medical personnel training.

His mentorship, teaching and leadership fell alongside his primary responsibility, being a patient-centered nurse. Even with the stressors that are a normal part of the job, Marklund recalls the most challenging piece was the mandatory quarantine upon arrival and departure.

"It really is brutal," said Marklund. "You are in complete isolation, no people, no interaction, completely alone in the same space for fourteen

days. For someone like me, that is used to being around students, working with fellow faculty and nurses, treating patients, that was certainly the most difficult thing to endure."

The admiration and appreciation for Marklund's service was demonstrated by fellow faculty absorbing additional duties to support students and especially by the pre-licensure undergraduate students graduating in December 2020. Marklund is one of the main faculty members that has been with their class since day one of their nursing school journey. By a unanimous vote, students requested Marklund present the graduates with their Texas A&M University College of Nursing Bachelor of Science in nursing pin at the fall recognition ceremony. For the first time since December 2019, the time-honored tradition to celebrate students' successful completion of their degrees is set to be held in-person.

His efforts in Germany did not go unnoticed either. Marklund received the Commendation Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters (OLCs) from the United States Army and was awarded the Armed Forces Service Medal. Students at the LPMC also presented him with a class gift at a ceremony highlighting their successful completion of the 14-week training led by Marklund supporting their transition into autonomous clinicians and professional U.S. Army Nurse Corps officers.



Clinical Nurse Transition Program (CNTP) students presented LTC LeRoy Marklund with a glass gift in appreciation of his expertise and mentorship.

Pictured left to right are 2LT Marion Lilly, 2LT Stephanie Hergeshimer, COL Jana Nohrenberg – Chief Nursing Officer, LTC LeRoy Marklund, 2LT Nixie Westling and 2LT Hannah Wieland

FACULTY AND LEADERSHIP

WELCOMING NEW FACULTY, LEADERSHIP

With continued growth in undergraduate and graduate student admissions, the Texas A&M University College of Nursing remains steadfast in maintaining a low student to faculty ratio while preparing to expand degree options available to prospective students in 2021.



**MARVELLOUS AKINLOTAN, BDS, PHD, MPH,
RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

With an extensive background in public health, Akinlotan joined the Texas A&M College of Nursing in 2019 as a post-doctoral research associate. She plays a vital role in supporting faculty to enhance their scholarship activities and recently transitioned to the role of assistant research professor.



**SHARON DORMIRE, PHD, RN, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR
UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION AND PROFESSOR**

Dormire initially joined the College of Nursing in 2016 as a tenured professor in our baccalaureate degree program. Her leadership role and responsibilities have grown as she was appointed assistant dean for undergraduate nursing education in 2019 and recently accepted the interim associate dean for academic affairs role.



**STACY DRAKE, PHD, MPH, RN, AFN-BC, D-ABMDI,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN FORENSIC NURSING**

As an active forensic nurse researcher, Drake came to the college in fall 2019, serves as a member of the elder fatality review team and as the expert forensic nurse consultant for the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences. Her research focuses on impacting populations through the reduction of preventable causes of death. Drake credits past work as an emergency medical service provider, firefighter, trauma nurse and death investigator as her drive to focus on ways to reduce preventable causes of death.



**DEB O'BRIANT, DNP, APRN, NP-C,
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

O'Briant recently completed her DNP at Vanderbilt University and after serving as a part-time faculty member, accepted the opportunity to transition to full-time clinical assistant professor in our family nurse practitioner master's degree program.



**MATTHEW SORENSON, PHD, APRN, FNP-C, FAAN, ASSISTANT
DEAN FOR GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION AND PROFESSOR**

Sorenson joined our college in fall 2019 as the assistant dean for graduate nursing education leading the development, implementation and evaluation of our master's degree program in addition to his appointment as professor. He also serves as lead in our DNP program currently under development while recently accepting the role of interim associate dean for faculty affairs.



**TODD STRICHERZ, MS,
ASSISTANT DEAN FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Just one month prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Stricherz joined our college with experience in holistic admissions process development, recruitment planning and organization of student services across multiple delivery sites for a variety of degree programs.



**SYLVIA VARGAS, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC,
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

After serving as a part-time faculty member, instrumental in our continued development and recruitment of students in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Vargas recently accepted a full-time clinical assistant professor position in our family nurse practitioner master's degree program.

FACULTY CERTIFIED AS HEALTHCARE SIMULATION EDUCATORS

Texas A&M College of Nursing provides training in two state-of-the-art Clinical Learning Resource Centers, a 24,000-square-foot facility in Bryan and a 17,000-square-foot facility in Round Rock. As of 2020, Cindy Weston, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, associate dean for clinical & outreach affairs and associate professor; Angela Mulcahy, PhD, RN, CMSRN, clinical associate professor; and the following assistant clinical professor faculty members carry the Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE) certification: Rickie Bonner, DNP, CNE; Laurie Charles, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, CA-CPSANE; Darla Gruben, MSN, RN, CNE; Martin Mufich, MSN, RN; Alison Pittman, PhD, RN; Elizabeth Wells-Beede, PhD, RN, C-EFM; and Shelley White-Corey, DNP, RNC, WHNP, CNE.



CARING FOR COMMUNITY

INTEGRATED HEALTH NETWORK LEVERAGES COMMUNITY SERVICES, ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND RURAL CARE

Texas A&M University College of Nursing researchers are working with rural health care providers to increase access to quality care in Central Texas. These collaborative partnerships will integrate behavioral health and primary care services in rural health clinics to enhance patient care while providing education and training opportunities for future nurse leaders.

Over the course of three years, a \$1.5 million Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant will be used to establish an academic-practice partnership with five different clinical sites to provide primary care led by family nurse practitioners (FNPs) strategically integrating with behavioral health services. With the College of Nursing as the hub of an integrated health network, students will have the opportunity to be immersed in clinical education and training while increasing access to care in underserved areas of the state.

Led by Cindy Weston, associate professor and associate dean for clinical and outreach affairs, a team of nurses from the college will establish a Nurse-led Collaborative Integrated Behavioral Health Rural Network. The research team includes Assistant Professor Robin Page as project evaluator; Clinical Assistant Professor Elizabeth Wells-Beede as the virtual reality simulation director; and Clinical Assistant Professor Martha Hare as the curriculum coordinator.

This unique collaboration offers an innovative approach in addressing health care disparities by utilizing nurses to the fullest extent of their education and licensure while also supporting future nursing generations through firsthand clinical experiences. As part of the grant-funded project, there are two external partners — Bluebonnet Trails Community Services, a local mental health authority, and B.I.S. Community Clinic, a designated rural health clinic — offering both primary care and behavioral health services that would otherwise be inaccessible to patients in these rural areas of Texas.

“Integrating primary care with behavioral health services improves the patient experience and health outcomes as well as reducing costs and delays in treatment,” Weston said.

This integration will include both in-person and telehealth models of care delivery to patients with acute and chronic conditions, and will include a specific emphasis on opioid use disorder prevention and treatment. The interprofessional collaboration outlines the placement of a licensed psychiatric-mental health care professional in a school-based clinic and the expansion of integrated behavioral health services offered by Bluebonnet Trails Community Services. In addition, telebehavioral health services will now be offered through the B.I.S. Community Clinic.

Andrea Richardson, executive director of Bluebonnet Trails, said this partnership will reduce barriers for patients seeking quality care in these rural areas.

“Psychiatric care through virtual visits broadens access to specialty care while responding to an increasing professional shortage,” Richardson said. “Licensed, certified and qualified professionals providing psychiatric evaluations, medication reviews, counseling, skills building and care coordination improve the patient experience by decreasing or eliminating stressful travel time and costs, and increasing engagement through convenient, integrated health care.”

Psychiatric care through virtual visits broadens access to specialty care while responding to an increasing professional shortage

To support nursing students and better prepare them for delivering patient-centered care through telebehavioral health services, virtual reality simulation and telehealth delivery models will be key components in the educational objective of the project. Immersing students in care delivery through these technologies provides them with unique experience serving patients via telehealth, for both those entering the nursing workforce and those who are already professional, working nurses.



The skills and comfort level needed in providing patient-centered care remotely will be fostered as nursing students use the technologies currently in place as part of their clinical education.

Elizabeth Ellis, owner and operator of the B.I.S. Community Clinic and adjunct faculty in the college, said this collaboration sets the stage for establishing viable solutions in delivering quality care in underserved areas.

“Given the limited access to behavioral health providers, this blended approach to rural health care and education will create synergy for our patients, students and the communities which we serve through the development of a sustainable model,” Ellis said.

Students pursuing a graduate nursing degree with a family nurse practitioner specialization and prelicensure undergraduate nursing students with an expressed interest in behavioral health will have the opportunity to obtain valuable work experience and complete clinical hours through this innovative, collaborative partnership.

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of award 1 UD7HP37638-01-00 totaling \$1.5M with 0% percentage financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents of this announcement are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

COMBATTING OPIOIDS

GRANT FUNDING WILL HELP PROGRAM PREVENT, REDUCE IMPACT OF OPIOID USE DISORDER ON WOMEN, CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHEASTERN TEXAS

A research team led by Texas A&M University College of Nursing was selected as one of 30 award recipients nationwide to receive federal grant funding through the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program-Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (RCORP-NAS). As part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), this \$500,000 grant award allows expansion of ongoing efforts to support women, children and families in rural areas impacted by opioid use disorder.

In Texas, 52 percent of child fatalities caused by maltreatment and 68 percent of cases where children were removed from their homes were related to parent or caregiver substance use. The Golden Crescent Children's Advocates for Recovery Equity (GC-CARE) is an initiative designed to reduce the incidence and impact of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) (the group of conditions caused by withdrawal from certain drugs an infant is exposed

to in the womb before birth) in rural communities by improving access to quality care, family support systems and social determinants of health.

Over the course of three years, the nurse-led project team will advance GC-CARE through a multi-faceted approach to encourage prevention, offer quality care, support families in recovery and provide valuable resources to health care professionals combatting substance use disorder (SUD). To do so, the research team will establish strategic partnerships among health systems, community organizations, recovery centers and fellow stakeholders in the Golden Crescent region, an area that includes rural communities in Gonzales, Lavaca, DeWitt, Jackson, Calhoun and Victoria counties.

Increasing access to quality care remains one of the top priorities in advancing health and patient outcomes in rural, underserved areas. GC-CARE will include the initiation of telehealth solutions



to provide access to screening, treatment and recovery services, including telebehavioral health, and care coordination to enhance referral and treatment for women at-risk for or with SUD. Online continuing education offerings on proper identification and treatment of SUD in pregnancy, management of childbirth and NAS, and support of parents of newborns in recovery, will also be developed to help ensure providers and stakeholders have access to timely, evidence-based practice to offer specialized care.

Reducing the stigma among those recovering and offering proactive, attainable measures to prevent SUD also play a vital role in GC-CARE. The development of a parent recovery program to provide one-on-one peer support for rural parents in recovery and school-based education, with an emphasis on preventing substance use, are both outlined. With an increased awareness on evidence-based prevention, treatment and management of SUD and NAS, this initiative within the Golden Crescent will help promote healthy babies and mothers, and keep families intact.

"When a mother, father, sister or brother struggles with substance use disorder, the entire family struggles," said Jane Bolin, PhD, JD, BSN, associate dean for research at the College of Nursing and lead principal investigator. "This grant focuses on neonatal abstinence syndrome prevention as well as childhood neglect, trauma and abuse. Our goals are to address the needs of children and their families. Under the leadership of Drs. Nancy Downing and Jodie Gary as principal investigators, an amazing team has been pulled together with the capacity to concentrate efforts in building recovery capital to support parents with substance and opioid use disorder and protect vulnerable newborns, children and families."

Announcement of the nationwide RCORP-NAS grant funding was shared by HRSA Administrator Thomas J. Engels on September 14, 2020 in person at the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (Texas A&M Health) in Bryan, Texas. "We are excited to celebrate these awards during National Recovery Month," Engels said. "RCORP-NAS will provide needed funding to rural residents grappling with the opioid epidemic to help many people reach recovery." Through the RCORP initiative, federal grant funding will help rural communities address barriers to care and the additional strains COVID-19 has placed on both rural individuals with substance use disorder and on rural organizations providing prevention, treatment and recovery services.

PROJECT TEAM

Co-principal investigators

[Jane Bolin](#), PhD, JD, BSN, Associate Dean for Research, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Nancy Downing](#), PhD, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, FAAN, Associate Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Jodie Gary](#), PhD, RN, Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

Co-investigators

[Carly McCord](#), PhD, Director of Telebehavioral Health and Clinical Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Medicine

[Sidney Ontai](#), MD, Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Medicine DeTAR Family Practice Residency Program

[Alison Pittman](#), PhD, RN, CPN, CNE, CHSE, Clinical Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Sharon Dormire](#), Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Nursing Education and Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Robin Page](#), PhD, APRN, CNM, Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Cindy Weston](#), Associate Dean for Clinical and Outreach Affairs and Associate Professor, Texas A&M College of Nursing

[Joy Alonzo](#), ME, PharmD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Texas A&M College of Pharmacy



This grant focuses on neonatal abstinence syndrome prevention as well as childhood neglect, trauma and abuse. Our goals are to address the needs of children and their families.

JANE BOLIN, PHD, JD, BSN



SERVING SURVIVORS

CENTER LEADS RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH IN FORENSIC NURSING

In 2019, The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents formally approved and established the Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing, transitioning the Texas A&M College of Nursing forensic nursing program into a state- and federally funded center. This designation significantly expands the capabilities and funding resource opportunities in support of the college's initiative to advance forensic nursing education, outreach and research.

"Through the center, we will be able to expand opportunities for interdisciplinary education as well as forensic nursing education," said Stacey Mitchell, DNP, MBA, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, clinical associate professor and director of the Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing.

"Through the center, we will be able to expand opportunities for interdisciplinary education as well as forensic nursing education," said Stacey Mitchell, DNP, MBA, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, clinical associate professor and director of the Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing.

"The Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing will accelerate multidisciplinary efforts to devise and implement comprehensive strategies that address interpersonal violence across the life span," said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, professor and dean of the college. "We are now in the best position to engage scholars throughout The Texas A&M University System to develop and disseminate new knowledge, positively impacting health and social outcomes for those affected by violence."

Forensic nursing is a specialty focused on the intersection of health care, criminal justice and legal systems. Forensic nurses are registered nurses (RN) or advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) who specialize in interpersonal violence prevention, intervention, investigation and post-trauma care. Areas of practice in this specialty include sexual assault, death investigation, corrections, disaster aftermath, risk management, intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, elder mistreatment and human trafficking.

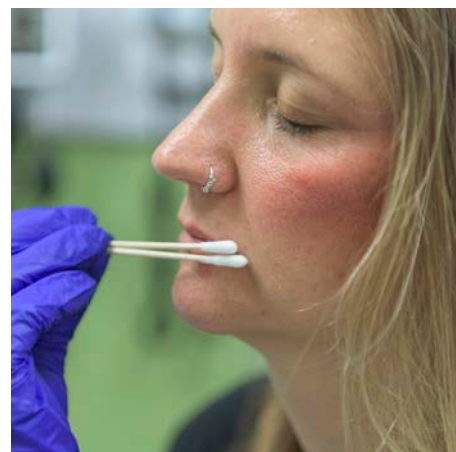
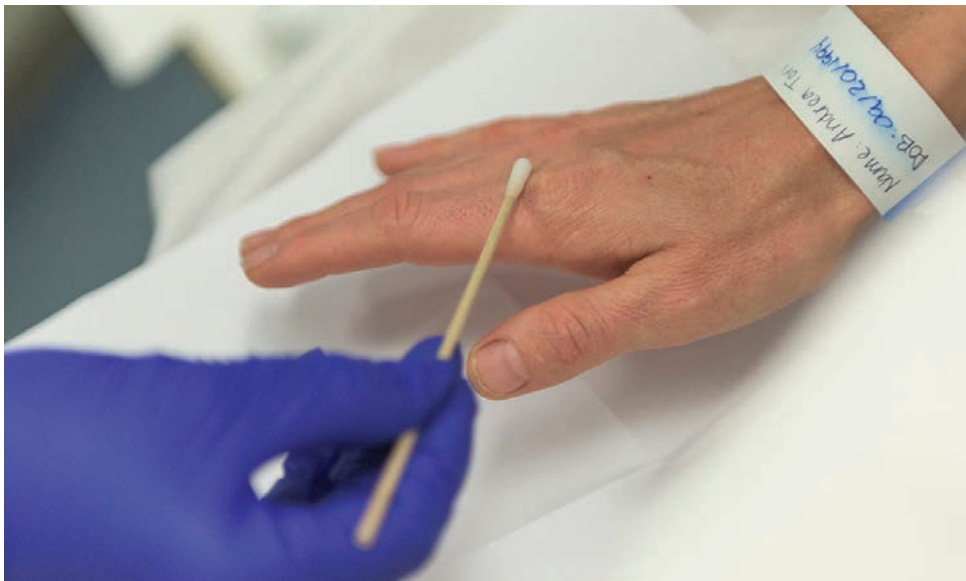
The center will allow the expansion of the college's existing master of science degree and graduate certificate in forensic nursing programs as well as interdisciplinary and professional education course trainings available to health care providers, law enforcement agencies, social workers and others seeking advanced education in treating victims

of violence. "Through the center, we will be able to expand opportunities for interdisciplinary education as well as forensic nursing education," said Stacey Mitchell, DNP, MBA, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, clinical associate professor and director of the center. "We are excited that we are better able to impact health care for vulnerable populations across Texas and beyond."

In the center's inaugural year alone, 362 registered nurses attended a forensic nursing educational activity with a total of 420 contact hours completed. These increased opportunities of outreach support registered nurses across the state seeking licensure as sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), expedites the timeliness of their ability to earn that licensure and ultimately expands our community of practice to serve those that survive intentional acts of violence. With federal grant funding awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to recruit and train nurses from rural and underserved areas in Texas, more than 100 registered nurses have advanced their knowledge in forensic nursing through the center's professional education courses free-of-charge.

To continue offering timely, evidence-based community outreach and education programs, the center leads in innovative forensic nursing research. In the areas of death investigation, traumatology and the reduction of preventable causes of death, Stacy Drake, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN, associate professor, serves as co-investigator on a national study to address elder mistreatment through forensic training and community resources. Drake is also the principal investigator of a research project evaluating longitudinal differences in rural and urban areas of violence where she leads an interprofessional team analyzing outcomes from sixteen different states supported by federal grant funding from the HRSA Federal Office of Health Policy.

Forensic nurses at the college believe that victims of intentional injury deserve patient-centered, trauma-informed care. Having a center dedicated to research, outreach and education provides forensic nurses across the globe with a resource for evidence-based training, keeping victims and all they have endured at the center of their treatment.





PILOT TESTING

STATEWIDE TELEHEALTH PROGRAM ESTABLISHED TO SERVE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IN RURAL, UNDERSERVED AREAS

With the Texas A&M Health Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing established in 2019, the Texas A&M University College of Nursing continues to expand outreach initiatives and implement innovative practices to reduce barriers and increase access to high-quality, patient-centered and trauma-informed care. The Texas A&M College of Nursing was awarded a \$4 million federal grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), a division of the United States Department of Justice, extending over a period of three years, to plan, develop and pilot test a statewide sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) telehealth program.

This grant creates a new precedent, supporting every aspect of the multifaceted telehealth proposal funded to reduce the burden placed on patients in rural areas and increase the odds of survivors seeking—and receiving—the best care possible. “It’s always better to provide care for patients at the first hospital they present to because it takes a lot of courage to seek health care after sexual assault,” said Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, CP-SANE, SANE-A, associate professor at the college and principal investigator of the grant. “The innovative teleforensic health care service will help reduce the burden on patients, meaning they

won’t have to transfer to hospitals with a forensic nursing program, sometimes hours away, and they won’t have to talk about the trauma repeatedly. Expert SANEs will be available 24 hours a day to guide health care providers through exams, offering support and confidence, to minimize risk of further trauma.”

The Texas Teleforensic Remote Assistance Center (Tex-TRAC), which is the formal name of the program begun under the grant, will allow a team of interdisciplinary experts to develop state-of-the-art medical forensic exam equipment and use evidence-based research to identify and collate data supporting improved medical forensic exam outcomes. Resources will also be leveraged to facilitate a tele-mentoring program for the ongoing support of pilot sites, including hospitals and other emergency health care providers, in rural and underserved areas. Three sites have accepted the opportunity to participate in the program: Val Verde Regional Medical Center, Knapp Medical Center and Uvalde Memorial Hospital.

An additional component includes the opportunity to amplify training efforts already underway as part of the college’s forensic nursing academic programs in preparing qualified and certified SANEs.

PILOT SITES

Val Verde Regional Medical Center

Knapp Medical Center

Uvalde Memorial Hospital

“Our faculty commitment to scholarly excellence is evident in this new federal funding award,” said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor of the college. “Most importantly, this work advances our efforts to assure quality health care for all people of Texas, particularly people who experience interpersonal violence.”

This grant will expand efforts outlined in a contract previously awarded to the college by the Office of the Texas Attorney General (OAG) to deliver telehealth forensic nursing exam guidance. The missions of both the OAG contract and the OVC federal grant parallel one another, allowing the research team to not only reach a larger number of pilot sites more quickly but to also provide much-needed support services for each.



The award to the interdisciplinary team at Texas A&M University is one of only four state awards made nationally by the OVC in response to increasing access to highly trained, experienced SANEs and other medical forensic examiners to provide high-quality care for victims of sexual assault. The team of experts includes:

Texas A&M University College of Nursing

- [Nancy Downing](#), PhD, RN, CP-SANE, SANE-A, PI/Director
- [Stacey Mitchell](#), DNP, MBA, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, Co-PI/Co-Director
- [Angela Mulcahy](#), PhD, RN, CMSRN, CHSE, Education Director/Coordinator of Training
- [Laurie Charles](#), MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, CA-CPSANE, CHSE, Director/Coordinator of SANE Services
- [Kim Zemanek](#), PhD, MEd, Associate Program Director
- [Chelsea Knutson](#), MSN, RN, Simulation Coordinator
- [Patricia Ehler](#), MSN, RN, CNE, Continuing Education Coordinator
- [Kayce Ward](#), MSN, RN, CA-SANE, CP-SANE, SANE-A, Forensic Nurse Manager

Texas A&M University College of Engineering, Department of Biomedical Engineering

- [Gerald Coté](#), PhD, Co-investigator, Remote Examination System

Texas A&M University College of Medicine

- [Carly McCord](#), PhD, Co-investigator
- [Regina Beard](#), EdD, RN, CNE, Co-investigator

Texas A&M University School of Public Health

- [Heather Clark](#), DrPH, Research Partner and Evaluator
- [Emily Martin](#), MS, Senior Research Associate

This was produced by the Texas A&M University College of Nursing under 2019-V3-GX-K019, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this release are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



STUDENTS FAST TRACK

Texas A&M University nursing students eligible to graduate in May 2020 were able to pursue an accelerated graduation plan allowing them the opportunity to quickly enter the workforce to support the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The College of Nursing extended this opportunity after Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced that he would waive certain regulations to allow nursing students at the end of their education program and retired nurses to more easily join the workforce. This temporary waiver was initiated in response to the rapidly growing need for health care professionals due to the unanticipated wake of a global health crisis.

The state allowed temporary permit extensions to graduate and vocational nurses who had not yet taken the licensing exam. Students in their last semester of nursing school were also granted approval to complete remaining hours needed to demonstrate clinical competency via virtual simulations.

"What this did for us is allow an opportunity to confer the degree early and share that conferral with the State Board of Nursing so that they can grant this temporary permit to practice so students could pursue employment as a graduate nurse or offer services in other ways," said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor of the college.



Nurses remain essential to the state's ability to test for the virus and provide patient care

Abbott acknowledged that Texas would continue to see a growing need for health care professionals to respond to the novel coronavirus crisis, and nurses remain essential to the state's ability to test for the virus and provide patient care. The state was already facing a nursing shortage before the pandemic, Fahrenwald said.

"We responded to Gov. Abbott's changes and said, 'What window of opportunity does this open for our Aggie nurses who will graduate in May 2020?'" Fahrenwald said. "We are very confident they are highly prepared to assume professional nursing roles."

Faculty created a plan for assessment, remediation and final exit examination to support students graduating early. In addition, they outlined the steps to be taken to apply for a temporary permit to practice as a graduate nurse until the students were able to take the licensure exam.

"We're assured them that this was an option for them," Fahrenwald said. "They could retain their current graduation date and spread their requirements out over that time period just as we had planned, or they could accelerate their degree completion requirements."

The COVID-19 pandemic closed many of the sites where Aggie nursing students complete their clinical rotations. In response, College of Nursing faculty incorporated virtual simulation experiences for the first time to assess students' clinical competency and help them achieve their final program requirements.

"This unprecedented circumstance allowed us to really be creative and work together to come up



with a solution that assures our students that the same program outcomes every other Aggie nurse has graduated under are the same ones that they will achieve, and that the standards and rigor of the program remain intact," Fahrenwald said.

Around eighty percent of pre-licensure students chose to pursue accelerated degree conferral, receiving their bachelor of science in nursing in April 2020.

JOIN THE AGGIE FNP PRECEPTOR NETWORK

As Texas A&M University graduates, our former students fulfill a calling of service that long outlasts the successful completion of course work, clinical hours and ultimately, their degrees.

Recognizing an opportunity to share the talent, experiences and expertise of those that successfully earned a master's degree in our family nurse practitioner specialty, the college created an Aggie FNP Preceptor network. Designed to support our former students' call to service, this initiative provides professional development resources to a centralized network of advanced practice registered nurses available and willing to mentor those following in their footsteps at Texas A&M College of Nursing.

Filling a vital role, preceptors commit to helping the next generation of caregivers by providing expert guidance and clinical oversight as students interact with and treat patients to advance their knowledge, expand their competency and earn an advanced degree to serve patients across the lifespan.

To learn more about the opportunity to serve as an Aggie FNP Preceptor and help shape the future of aspiring Aggie FNP nurses, submit your information at tx.ag/FNPpreceptor.





ADOPTING VIRTUAL PATIENTS

A digital patient named Doris is lying in a hospital bed, recovering from a hysterectomy. A nurse enters the room and introduces herself before walking to the sink and washing her hands.

Clinical Assistant Professor Angela Mulcahy clicks a button indicating that the nurse on her computer screen should take the patient's blood pressure and listen to her breathing with a stethoscope. Demonstrating an example of the kind clinical experiences students in Texas A&M University's College of Nursing are now completing, Mulcahy said they're the same steps students normally complete with their patients in clinics or hospitals.

The only difference, Mulcahy said, is that it's a simulated interaction happening through a computer program.

Under normal circumstances, Texas A&M nursing students complete their clinical rotations at local clinics and hospitals. Many of these opportunities have been suspended as facilities across the state grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, Texas Governor Greg Abbott supported temporarily waiving limits on the number of clinical hours that can be completed in a simulated care setting to help nursing students meet their clinical competency requirements needed to graduate. Also as a means to get more health care professionals into the workforce, the

state is allowed temporary permit extensions to graduate and vocational nurses who had not yet taken the licensing exam.

The College of Nursing seized on those changes to help answer the call for more health care workers: May 2020 seniors completing their final semester were given an option to fast-track their graduation plan, and virtual patient simulations were integrated for the first time so prelicensure students had an opportunity to complete the clinical education hours needed to graduate.

"Because our clinical sites located in health care systems are moving very quickly to respond to preparation for the pandemic, what that has meant for us is coming up with alternative solutions for clinical experiences has had to move really quickly," said Dean Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean of the college. "Our faculty identified a virtual simulation experience that allowed us to assess competency of our students clinically as well as to achieve our final program objectives so that we could determine whether our May 2020 pre-licensure BSN [Bachelor of Science in Nursing] graduates were prepared to enter into the workforce."

Like the rest of the college's classes, simulations had to move online as a result of the public health crisis. The college routinely uses simulated scenarios with human patients, but faculty and staff had to move quickly to implement the virtual simulations.

“Our faculty identified a virtual simulation experience that allowed us to assess competency of our students clinically as well as to achieve our final program objectives.”

Mulcahy serves as the prelicensure program coordinator and simulation lead for the College of Nursing.

“Given the current circumstances with clinical settings limiting student experiences as they respond to COVID-19, it became necessary for us to find another way to meet those clinical objectives,” Mulcahy said.

Depending on the course, students were expected to complete a set number of hours in a clinical setting to demonstrate that they can thoroughly assess a patient, prioritize problems and come up with an appropriate plan of care. Mulcahy said this might mean working 12-hour days for about 10 days in a clinical or surgical unit.

Mulcahy said the simulations are surprisingly realistic compared to what a student would encounter in a hospital. The virtual simulations effectively look the same: students enter a patient’s room, identify themselves, wash their hands and click through a

menu of questions to ask. Mulcahy says the objective remains the same – to make assessments and work with the health care team to care for a patient.

“Unlike doing it with their actual hands at the bedside or in the simulation lab, they’re clicking on buttons,” she said. “But they’re still having to think through each step of the process and actually identify each step in the right order before they’re able to essentially move on.”

Faculty members assign patient simulations to their students, and can see a time log of what actions were taken, in what order and how long it took the student to complete them. It’s a useful tool that Mulcahy hopes to use in her classes even after the coronavirus crisis subsides.

“Having that document I see being an incredible asset to myself as faculty to augment what we’re already doing clinically,” Mulcahy said.

Faculty have adjusted and adapted quickly to the technology, she said, and so far the feedback from students has been very favorable.

“I was really kind of holding my breath, not sure how they would feel about the scenarios, but a lot of things that I’ve seen in the reflections and student comments are exactly what I would hope to see in a clinical setting,” Mulcahy said. “They’re saying, ‘Hey, I needed to prioritize better, I needed to review this.’”





BUILDING A PIPELINE

GAINING CLINICAL EXPERIENCE IN AREA OF INTEREST OFFERS SKILLS, PLACEMENT PRIOR TO GRADUATION THROUGH NEW HCA HOUSTON HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP

Strategic academic-practice partnerships create unique opportunities in establishing a pipeline of highly qualified and experienced nurses. By equipping students with firsthand experience in the area of specialty they are most interested in pursuing, health care providers are investing in the future of patient-centered care, and supporting career placement and advancement of future nurses.

Texas A&M University College of Nursing joined forces with HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest to establish a dedicated education unit (DEU) – a formal commitment made prior to the onset of COVID-19 – with students set to begin their in-person clinical experience at the start of the fall 2020 semester. While the pandemic certainly caused unanticipated setbacks in launching the

initiative, students successfully began clinical rotations under the mentorship of experienced registered nurses in September 2020.

Selected through a competitive application process, six nursing students that demonstrated an interest in advancing their knowledge in a specialized area make up the inaugural cohort of the newly established DEU and are successfully advancing through the pre-licensure Bachelor of Science in nursing degree program. HCA Houston Healthcare celebrated the collaboration by welcoming the cohort with a formal introduction to the leadership team, nurses committed to supporting their education as preceptors and the hospital itself prior to their first clinical rotation.



HCA HOUSTON HEALTHCARE NORTHWEST DEU

The HCA Houston Healthcare Northwest DEU inaugural cohort includes Lauren Hinze, Gentri McSpadon, Sloan King, Caden Moore, Anya Kircher and Makenna Schneider, all currently in their senior year as pre-licensure undergraduate nursing students.

"The DEU expands on traditional clinical hours earned by pre-licensure nursing students," said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor at Texas A&M College of Nursing. "It is a unique academic-private partnership structured to support immersive clinical experience tailored to enhance nursing education and prepare graduates before they enter the workforce as highly skilled, patient-centered caregivers."

"It is a unique academic-private partnership structured to support immersive clinical experience tailored to enhance nursing education and prepare graduates before they enter the workforce as highly skilled, patient-centered caregivers."

Students participating in the DEU are halfway through their senior year at the College of Nursing and on schedule to graduate in 2021. These nursing students will be eligible to take the NCLEX-RN® licensure exam and begin their careers as registered nurses with the potential to join HCA Houston Healthcare thanks to their experience in this DEU as undergraduates.

This partnership marked the first initiative of its kind in HCA Houston Healthcare's Gulf Coast Division and has served as a catalyst in developing DEUs with fellow health care providers across the state. Through these collaborative efforts, a model to provide an optimal learning environment for students while gaining immersive clinical experience was established to support education, training and job placement needs for both students and health care providers.





A GOOD CATCH

Committed to patient safety, our nursing students recognize the importance and direct impact their decisions and actions have in supporting positive outcomes, even in difficult or uncomfortable situations.

On October 23, 2020, one of our students noticed something laying in the parking lot of the hospital where she was completing clinical hours that seemed off. With the instinctive responsibility of promoting safety for fellow nursing students, preceptors and patients, she reported the suspicious circumstance. Her choice led the hospital to take appropriate action and support safe patient care.

This student is Selene Raga. Born in Juarez, Mexico, Raga earned a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology from the University of Texas in El Paso in 2011 and began her path to becoming an Aggie nurse in fall 2019. Her demonstrated commitment in serving others and upholding the Aggie Core Values as a

nursing student while gaining clinical experience was not only noticed but celebrated by nursing leadership at St. David's Round Rock Medical Center.

Raga was surprised with a formal presentation of the hospital's Good Catch Award in front of her peers and nursing staff. She is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Science in nursing degree, following the Traditional BSN degree track at our Round Rock campus, and is set to graduate in August 2021.

St. David's Round Rock Medical Center serves as a valued partner in preparing pre-licensure nursing students following our Traditional and Second Degree BSN tracks. More than XXXX clinical hours have been earned since YEAR by students earning their bachelor's degree in nursing.





DIVERSITY CHAMPION

TEXAS A&M RECEIVES INSIGHT INTO DIVERSITY 2020 HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD, NAMED 'DIVERSITY CHAMPION'

For the second consecutive year, Texas A&M University received the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. In addition, the university was named a 2020 Diversity Champion.

The annual HEED Award is a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"We're very honored to receive this national recognition for the second consecutive year," said Texas A&M University President Michael K. Young. "It is our goal to ensure that every person who steps onto our campus feels welcomed, respected and included. Although we still have much work to do, the HEED Award is important acknowledgement of the efforts of so many people who are helping us move in the direction of those aspirations."

Robin Means Coleman, vice president and associate provost for diversity, said the award is important because it represents the university's outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"It is our goal to ensure that every person who steps onto our campus feels welcomed, respected and included."

"Receiving a 2020 HEED Award holds Texas A&M to a still higher standard of accountability to our campus communities and provides the institution with an opportunity to further reflect on challenges, identify new goals and celebrate the institution's ongoing progress toward diversity and inclusion," Coleman said. "Fulfilling Texas A&M's land-grant mission requires the campus community to identify opportunities to improve access to higher education to groups that have historically been excluded, such as people of color and women."

Among the efforts recognized by the magazine are The President's Council on Climate and Diversity (PCCD); The Diversity Matters Seed Grant Program; The Accountability, Climate, Equity and Scholarship (ACES) Fellows Programs; annual Diversity Accountability Reports from the university's colleges and units and more.

"The HEED Award process consists of a comprehensive and rigorous application that includes questions relating to the recruitment and retention of students and employees — and best practices for both — continued leadership support for diversity, and other aspects of campus diversity and inclusion," said Lenore Pearlstein, publisher of INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. "We take a detailed approach to reviewing each application in deciding who will be named a HEED Award recipient. Our standards are high, and we look for institutions where diversity and inclusion are woven into the work being done every day across their campus."



RE-ACCREDITED BY CCNE

BACCALAUREATE, MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS ACCREDITED THROUGH DECEMBER 2030

In February 2020, Texas A&M University College of Nursing hosted a team from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for an on-site evaluation of our baccalaureate and master's degree programs. As an autonomous accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, CCNE contributes to the improvement of the public's health by ensuring the quality and integrity of baccalaureate, graduate and residency programs in nursing.

As a voluntary, self-regulatory process, CCNE accreditation supports and encourages continuing self-assessment by nursing programs, and supports continuing growth and improvement of collegiate professional education and entry-to-practice nurse residency programs. Designed to evaluate each program offered, Texas A&M College of Nursing underwent a self-study process assessing measures

outlined in the CCNE Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs.

To ensure the self-study was thorough and accurate, an evaluation team visited the college and shared their recommendation to the commission regarding the continuation of accreditation for our programs. The College of Nursing received its initial 5-year accreditation of the baccalaureate program in 2009, followed by reaccreditation in 2014. The initial 5-year accreditation of the master's degree program was awarded in 2015.

As a result of the self-study and recommendation by the evaluation team, the baccalaureate degree programs in nursing and master's degree programs in nursing at Texas A&M University College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (<http://www.ccneaccreditation.org>) through December 31, 2030.



FACULTY ACCOLADES



Jane Bolin, PhD, JD, BSN, Associate Dean for Research and Professor

Named Regents Professor by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents



Rebecca Burns, DNP, RN, Clinical Assistant Professor

Recipient of The Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching, College-Level, 2020



Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, FAAN, Associate Professor

Elected president of International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), designated as a Fellow by the American Academy of Nurses and re-appointed to Texas Forensic Science Commission



Stacy Drake, PhD, MPH, RN, AFN-BC, D-ABMDI, Associate Professor

Designated as Fellow by the American Academy of Nurses



Darla Gruben, MSN, RN, CHSE, CNE, Clinical Assistant Professor

Selected as The DAISY Faculty Award recipient



Matt Hoffman, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, Clinical Assistant Professor

Selected as the 2020 Phyllis R. Frye Advocacy Award recipient, one of the Accountability, Climate and Equity (ACE) awards



Stacey Mitchell, DNP, MBA, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, Clinical Associate Professor

Appointed to Texas Governor's Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF)



Nora Montalvo-Liendo, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor

Successfully earned tenure and promoted to associate professor



Angela Mulcahy, PhD, RN, CMSRN, CHSE, Clinical Associate Professor

Named Research Fellow by the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation & Learning (INACSL)



Elizabeth Wells-Beede, PhD, RN, C-EFM, CHSE, Clinical Assistant Professor

Elected Vice President of Outreach on the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation & Learning (INACSL) Board of Directors



Cindy Weston, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CHSE, Associate Dean for Clinical & Outreach Affairs and Associate Professor

Named President-elect of the Texas Family Nurse Practitioner Association Board of Directors



RE-DESIGNATED AS NLN CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

CONTINUED EFFORTS IN CREATING ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EARN RE-DESIGNATION

The Texas A&M University College of Nursing has earned the National League of Nursing's (NLN) prestigious designation as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education™ (COE) in Creating Environments that Enhance Student Learning and Professional Development for the years 2020–2024. As a re-designation, this competitive award acknowledges the outstanding innovations, commitment and sustainability of continued excellence within the College of Nursing since its initial designation as an NLN COE in 2016.

“Our faculty are committed to innovative competency-based nursing education that is aligned with our mission, goals and values as a college of nursing,” said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor of the College of Nursing. “This national distinction is a reflection of our commitment to offering high quality programs that exceed national standards of excellence.”

The college joins 16 fellow nursing schools across the nation to attain a COE status award this year and is one of only 64 institutions to do so since the COE program's inception in 2004. On an annual basis, the NLN invites nursing schools to apply for the esteemed designation based on the institution's ability to demonstrate sustained excellence in concrete, measurable outcomes.

“NLN Centers of Excellence help raise the bar for all nursing programs by role modeling visionary leadership and environments of inclusive excellence. These environments help nurture the

next generation of a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the health of the nation and the global community,” said NLN Chief Executive Officer Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN.

With a dynamic curriculum that incorporates innovative approaches to traditional coursework, clinical placement and strategic opportunities to earn specialized certifications as students, pre-licensure graduates consistently achieve the highest first-time pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN®) in Texas. Consistently maintaining a nearly 100 percent employment rate within one year of graduation for both baccalaureate and master's programs, former students are meeting Texas nursing workforce needs with many serving in rural and underserved areas across the state.

The Texas A&M College of Nursing and fellow COEs were formally recognized at the NLN's Annual Education Summit held virtually in September 2020.

The NLN was founded in 1893 as the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses and was the first nursing organization in the United States. Known as ‘The Voice of Nursing Education,’ the NLN boasts a network of 40,000 individual member and 1,200 institutional members, and offers professional development, networking opportunities, testing services, nursing research grants and public policy initiatives to support continued advancement of nursing education.

NATIONALLY RANKED MSN PROGRAM

WITHIN FIVE YEARS OF ESTABLISHING AN ONLINE MASTER'S IN NURSING DEGREE PROGRAM, TEXAS A&M COLLEGE OF NURSING RANKED AMID NATION'S BEST

With more than one-third of its final rank coming from success in retaining and graduating students, the Texas A&M University College of Nursing climbed to the number 11 spot in the U.S. News & World Report's 2020 rankings for online graduate nursing programs offered at accredited institutions.

The Texas A&M College of Nursing offers three different Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs—family nurse practitioner, nursing education and forensic nursing—all of which have course instruction delivered online with clinical hours completed primarily in the communities where nurses seeking to advance their education currently reside and work.

"Our commitment to quality outcomes for our online graduate programs is reflected in this outstanding national ranking," said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor of the College of Nursing. "We are proud of this exceptional ranking earned within the first five years of establishing our graduate degree programs delivered online."

We are proud of this exceptional ranking earned within the first five years of establishing our graduate degree programs delivered online

As a component in measuring the successful retention and graduation rates of students, U.S. News & World Report also reviews social mobility, dialing in on the number of students who received federal Pell Grants that successfully graduated from a college's programs. Resources available to faculty—including student-to-faculty ratio and faculty salary—as well as expert opinion, per-student spending by the college, student excellence prior to admittance and alumni giving make up the remaining portion of the ranking.

In 2014, the college's MSN degree programs were approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the inaugural class of MSN in nursing education cohort began their advanced education. Since 2015, when the MSN programs were initially accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the family nurse practitioner and forensic nursing master's programs have been formalized with additional graduate degree and post-graduate certificate programs currently in development.

LEARN.ORG

Our Master of Science in Nursing-Family Nurse Practitioner online degree program was ranked #3 in the nation by Learn.org.



REGISTEREDNURSING.ORG

Texas A&M University College of Nursing ranked #5 best nursing school in Texas out of more than 100 programs available by RegisteredNursing.org.





ROSEMARY MARTINEZ

SOLDIER APPLIES PASSION FOR SERVING OTHERS

For Rosemary Martinez, a passion for serving others is more than a catch phrase; it is the guiding principle that motivates her to give every day her all.

A desire for serving others is what led Martinez, a soldier in the National Guard, to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing from the Texas A&M University College of Nursing.

Changing focus

Martinez graduated from Texas A&M with a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2010. She wanted to earn her doctorate and looked to the military to help her achieve her goal, a decision she doesn't regret.

"In my decision to enlist, I have had so many blessings. Not just from school money, but I learned about discipline, goal setting, having a purpose and, ultimately, serving others," she said.

During her visit at an Army recruiting office, Martinez's recruiter suggested a military occupation specialty (MOS) in the medical field instead of psychology.

"I had a straightforward conversation with the recruiter," she said. "The recruiter told me, 'You know psychology, so why not try for something different, like medic?' I thought about it for like two seconds and agreed. My best assignments have been the ones I just said 'yes' to."

Teaching nursing skills

After four years of service in the Army, Martinez had a child and decided to transition to the National Guard. Now a sergeant, Martinez serves as a Health Care Specialist, training medics for her company and others.

"This role allows me to practice and teach the skills I learned in nursing school at Texas A&M to the medics I work with," she said. "I instill in them what we sometimes lack in the field, such as hand hygiene, patient safety, patient privacy and professionalism."

Serving others

For Martinez, the values instilled in her by the Army and as a student at Texas A&M are the driving force of how she treats people and patients.

"The value I practice the most often is selfless service," Martinez said. "Serving others can be something as little as an encouragement of uplifting my classmates or as big as giving up my time and money to those that need it."

She also began volunteering as a mentor to teenage girls for Save Our Streets Ministries earlier in 2019. "I serve as a spiritual youth leader to young women from the ages of 12 to 18," she said. "I serve others as though I am serving God himself. Some days I come up short but most days I succeed."

People in your corner

"When you tackle a task like nursing school, you have to have people in your corner to take you to the next step," Martinez said. "The faculty and staff really care about students' well-being and truly believe we can succeed."

Martinez says she appreciates the assistance from the College of Nursing faculty and staff in helping her navigate nursing school. "They made me feel welcome and a part of the Aggie community," she said.

Sometimes military responsibilities and clinical rotations can overlap; however, the faculty worked with her to make up missed experiences. Martinez specifically mentioned Michael Hutton, a clinical assistant professor who served 20 years in the United States Air Force.

"Professor Hutton was amazing in helping me figure out a plan of action to complete any missed days," Martinez said. "He was gracious in allowing me to find the best day for me to make up the clinical I missed."

Looking ahead

Martinez was one of the spring 2020 graduates that elected for early degree conferral in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that she has earned her bachelor's degree in nursing, Martinez wants to earn her master's in Forensic Nursing. She said she wants to apply her nursing degrees to combat human trafficking.

"I read an article from Texas A&M that detailed human trafficking," she said. Martinez did some of her own research, making her realize "this happens in our neighborhoods and in our own backyards. I want to learn how to combat human trafficking as a citizen until I am called as a nurse to combat it in that manner," she said. "I am looking to join an organization that provides resources for those who are victims of human trafficking."

Along with being a nurse, Martinez says she wants to continue serving in the military.

"I love the Army," she said. "Serving is what has given me the ability to balance and navigate this schedule with such confidence."

Serving is what has given me the ability to balance and navigate this schedule with such confidence.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JORDAN WYATT, BSN, RN

"Jordan comforts my son when he's anxious or scared, makes him laugh to brighten the mood and always treats [him] and us as if we are his only patient that night, knowing he has to juggle multiple patients... He has entered into our pain, sorrow and joy equally, and has given us good memories in the midst of hard times."

These words are from a father watching his son heal at the hands of an Aggie nurse. Jordan Wyatt, BSN, RN, pediatric surgical trauma nurse at Dell Children's Medical Center, serves patients and their families as if they are his own and it shows. Wyatt received the DAISY of the Month award in April for his compassion, excellence and selflessness in serving others. He earned his bachelor's degree in nursing following the Second Degree BSN track at our Round Rock campus, graduating Magna Cum Laude in May 2018.

His call to service and leadership was evident during his time as a student. Wyatt served as a student nurse ambassador, co-president of the Nursing Christian Fellowship, student inter-professional committee member of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, was active in the Student Nurses Association and was a nominee for the Dean's Excellence Award.



Pictured left to right are Elizabeth Fredeboelling, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer; Jordan Wyatt, BSN, RN; Yvonne Beltran, BSN, RN, Clinical Manager, 3 North Surgical Trauma Unit; and Andrew Kosko, MSN, RN, CCRN, CPN, Director of Pediatric Nursing Acute Care Services

Pictured left to right are Lindsey LeCompte, Kara Schooley and Peter Passarelli, 2019 MSN in Forensic Nursing graduates



SUPPORT LEADERS

ENDOWMENTS, LECTURESHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

We are committed to educating the best-prepared nurses and nurse educators, while staying true to the mission of our land-grant university in serving the needs of the state of Texas through sustainable outreach and translatable research.

Private support of the college is crucial, and the impact of your generosity will be felt for generations to come. Creating a sustainable pipeline of diverse nursing students committed to providing patient-centered care and identifying future nurse leaders in clinical settings, teaching roles, research initiatives, administrative capacities and patient advocacy is key. All gifts, regardless of size, make a positive impact as we work with nursing faculty, health organizations and community leaders across Texas to help address health care challenges.

They allow students, scholars, researchers and former students to make valuable contributions to the world's body of knowledge. Your support allows dreams to become reality and transforms potential into action. Through your support, you can:

- Create scholarships and fund translational research programs
- Provide finest facilities to encourage creativity and innovation
- Increase access to health care, and support community outreach and educational programs
- Recruit, retain internationally recognized faculty by supporting their research and teaching

INAUGURAL MSN IN FORENSIC NURSING GRADUATES

In December 2019, the inaugural class of forensic nursing graduate students successfully earned their master of science in nursing degree from Texas A&M University. These professional nurses completed 36 credit hours of online coursework and 45 on-site simulation hours in addition to clinical experiences to earn their advanced degree.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Each year, the Austin American-Statesman leads an initiative to recognize nurses in the Austin metro area for the work they do, day in and day out. Two former students currently serving patients at Dell Children's Medical Center were nominated and selected as finalists for 2020. Both students graduated in May 2019 following the Second Degree BSN track at our Round Rock campus.



KATHLEEN BAILEY, BSN, RN

Kathleen "Katie" Bailey, BSN, RN, rehab and acute care pediatric nurse, earned her finalist position in the 'Rookie' category with the nominator noting her patient-centered care as 'thorough, knowledgeable and positive.'



SAM BURWELL, BSN, RN

Samuel "Sam" Burwell, BSN, RN, acute care inpatient rehab nurse, earned his finalist position in the 'Rehab' category with the nominator noting his 'communicative, effective and compassionate' approach when interacting with patients.

AGGIE NURSES: SHARE YOUR STORIES

Engaging our former students and remaining in contact with Texas A&M nurses across the globe is a priority for us. Former students are invited to share their stories to be showcased on the College of Nursing website, social media and other communication and marketing platforms.

Stay engaged, sign up for our e-newsletter and learn ways you can support your alma mater at:
nursing.tamu.edu/alumni



SUPPORT THE COLLEGE

Your contribution supports our ability to serve as pioneers in the field of nursing to continue making a positive impact through excellence in nursing education, research and service. Financial gifts may be designated for the college, faculty, students or areas of greatest need to support our key initiatives in expanding educational programming, research and scholarships.

YOUR GIFT MATTERS

Each dollar given supports our mission in attracting, retaining and educating nurses with a commitment to interdisciplinary engagement. As a private donor, your positive impact has no end.



1,480 +
nursing graduates since 2008



99%
students that successfully graduate



20+
scholarships offered by college donors



Visit the Texas A&M Foundation to make your financial contribution online:
tx.ag/supportTAMUnursing.



To plan a scholarship, fellowship or endowed gift, please email:
prabel@txamfoundation.com.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
College of Nursing

8447 Riverside Pkwy.
Health Professions Education Building
Bryan, TX 77807



VITAL RECORD

A news publication of Texas A&M Health, Vital Record offers insight on the latest in health, medicine and scientific discovery from experts across our five colleges and numerous centers and institutes.

 vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/nursing