

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

NURSING

MAGAZINE 2019



A new era of
nursing research



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



The Texas A&M College of Nursing marked its first decade in 2018, a fantastic time to join the college as dean. Shortly after my arrival on campus in June, we celebrated our accomplishments with an anniversary luncheon honoring our inaugural dean, Sharon Wilkerson, the first recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. The foundation of excellent programs developed under Sharon's leadership provided a launching point for our next decade of innovation.

At the same event, we celebrated accomplishments with two other awards. One went to an outstanding former student, Kristen Schapson '12, whose dedicated clinical work in Houston during Hurricane Harvey was recognized as embracing the Aggie Core Values of selfless service and excellence. More on her story can be found later in this magazine. The other, the Clinical Partnership Award, went to the Seton Williamson Medical Center in Round Rock in recognition of their support of the college and the nursing education provided through our Round Rock location. These honorees exemplify the outstanding leaders, graduates and partners of our college, and we look forward to celebrating new recipients every year.

Looking to the future, our vision is aligned with that of our land-grant university: to serve the people of Texas and beyond through accessible, quality nursing education and meaningful outreach coupled with impactful research to improve health and quality of life across the state. All people deserve health care that is tailored to their unique needs. We will prepare graduates who play a central role in transforming the health care system to create a more accessible, high-quality and value-driven environment.

Our research programs and partnerships are sustainably growing as we recognize that interdisciplinary opportunities are essential to our success in improving the health care landscape, especially for rural and underserved populations. When we work in true partnership, priorities are mutual, solutions are co-created and health inequities are improved. Our partnership with state and clinical service agencies showcases our commitment to upholding the mission of Texas A&M University.

Our faculty and students are already transforming access to cancer screenings for a population of women who would otherwise have limited options. Through the Well Woman's Clinic, offered in partnership with the Health For All clinic in Brazos County and funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, the college provides clinical education opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students while improving rates of cancer screenings.

Collaboration among registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, forensic nurses and nurse scientists will continue as we lead innovative, evidence-based practices to reduce health risks and improve early detection of health conditions. By nature, this will advance quality, accessible and equitable care that truly meets population health needs while improving individualized, patient-centered decision making.

Our vision will be realized with the support of our former students and friends who inspire us with their excellence, generosity and shared tenacity for improving population health. As our scholarship base, endowed professorships and centers of excellence grow, we will serve compassionately to shape the future of nursing at Texas A&M and prepare graduates to serve others across the state, the region, the nation and the world!

With gratitude and excitement for the future,

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



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DECADE OF GROWTH

2005

**Texas A&M University
Health Science Center**

partners with Texas A&M
Corpus Christi to plan
Bachelor of Science in nursing

2013

**Master of Science
in nursing (MSN)**

approved by Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board

2009

**Baccalaureate
degree program**

receives initial five-year
accreditation by the
Commission on Collegiate
Nursing Education (CCNE)

2005

**Bachelor of Science in
nursing (BSN) program
inaugural class**

admitted with a total
of 44 students

College approved

by both the Texas Higher
Education Coordinating
Board and Texas Board
of Nursing

2008

35 students in the College of Nursing initiate
Disaster Day, now the largest student-led,
interprofessional emergency response
simulation in the United States

**Post-licensure
registered nurse
(RN) to BSN**
track begins

Bryan campus
opens

Round Rock location
opens

2010

**Master of Science
in nursing education
program (MSN)**

begins with inaugural
class of 10 students

**McAllen recruiting
and advising location**
opens

CCNE Reaccreditation
for 10 years

2014

"Our vision is to empower a diverse population of nurses to improve the health of vulnerable, underserved populations and to increase access to health care across the state."

—Nancy Fahrenwald, Dean and Professor

2015

Master's degree program

receives initial five-year accreditation by the CCNE

MSN in family nurse practitioner

program begins

2017

MSN in forensic nursing program

applications open

FUTURE PLANS

DNP and PhD programs

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Post-Graduate Certificate

Additional graduate specialties

Program expansion to the Rio Grande Valley

Research and endowed professorships

MSN in forensic nursing
students admitted

Associate Dean for Clinical and Outreach Affairs and Associate Dean for Research
added to administrative team

Office of Research
established

\$1.47M grant
from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to recruit and train sexual assault nurse examiners

2018

National League for Nursing

recognizes college as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education for Creating Environments that Enhance Student Learning and Professional Development

Lufkin recruiting and advising location
established

2016

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING
10 YEARS | 2008–2018



HONORING A LEGACY

The Texas A&M College of Nursing was created with a clear purpose: educate the best nurses for future generations and elevate nursing academics. Leading that vision was founding dean Sharon Wilkerson, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, dean and professor emeritus.

With more than 50 years of experience, Wilkerson has been a leader in nursing education. As founding dean, she helped build the college from the ground up. Since its inception, the college has seen tremendous growth and upward trajectory. The inaugural class of 44 baccalaureate nursing students in 2008 was on one campus; now the college includes online education and more than 400 graduate and undergraduate students with two program delivery sites in Texas: Bryan-College Station and Round Rock. The college also grew to include recruiting and advising locations in McAllen and Lufkin.

After a career of service to clinical and academic nursing, Wilkerson leaves another legacy to future generations of nurses at Texas A&M: an endowed lectureship.

Created by Wilkerson and her late husband, Clarence Wilkerson, PhD, distributions from the endowment will be used to support lectureships in the College of Nursing and the College of Sciences' Department of Mathematics at Texas A&M University. The series' first lecture, held May 13, 2019, focused on mindfulness and compassion for leadership.

"We believe that these lectures will help enhance the atmosphere of nursing education at Texas A&M by allowing faculty to expand their horizons and continue to push the envelope for how they see the practice and education of nurses," Wilkerson said.

After a career of service to clinical and academic nursing, Wilkerson leaves another legacy to future nurses at Texas A&M: an endowed lectureship.

Prior to her career in nursing education, Wilkerson was a clinical nurse specialist for children with respiratory conditions and a nurse researcher for several years, conducting evidence-based research on nursing care. Wilkerson is the recipient of many honors and awards for exceptional work in the nursing education field, such as Oxford Who's Who "Tier of Excellence" Lifetime Achievement Recipient, Girl Scouts Woman of Distinction (2018), Inaugural Texas A&M University College of Nursing Distinguished Service Award (2018), Texas A&M University Distinguished Achievement Award for Administration (2016) and Texas A&M University Fish Camp Namesake (2015). She was inducted as a Fellow of the Academy of Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing in 2013.

MILITARY NURSES

The Texas A&M College of Nursing recently hired two full-time faculty members who both served as military officers and nurses. As veterans, LeRoy Marklund, DNP, MSN, RN, and Michael Hutton, MSN, RN, exemplify the College of Nursing's interest in and dedication to providing enriching and relatable academic instruction. Marklund and Hutton have strengthened the college's ability to offer unique perspectives garnered from real-life experience for students seeking specialized nursing careers after graduation.

LeRoy Marklund, DNP, MSN, RN



Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Marklund joined the college as a clinical assistant professor in 2018 after a 30-year career in the U.S. Army as an enlisted soldier and officer. He graduated with a degree from Fresno State College in horticulture, but after spending nearly 15 years

in California agriculture, he was encouraged by his sister, a critical care nurse, to make a career change.

After deciding to become a nurse in the Army, Marklund worked in critical care, going on medical missions in the heart of Afghanistan and Iraq. As his military career progressed, he worked stateside treating injured soldiers and veterans, and then provided nursing education on trauma and the medical effects of biological and chemical warfare. Throughout his tenure in the Army, he most enjoyed how nursing presented different hands-on challenges.

Marklund specializes in emergency, critical and trauma care. Having worked with soldiers in the field to veterans in the stateside hospital, he offers a wide breadth of experience to his students.

Michael Hutton, MSN, RN



Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Hutton, a registered nurse since 1980, became a full-time clinical assistant professor in 2018 after teaching part-time at the college since 2017. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from The University of Texas Health Science Center School of Nursing at San Antonio.

While in the U.S. Air Force, he cared for patients across the world in places such as Guantanamo Bay and Japan. From humanitarian efforts treating tuberculosis outbreaks to caring for patients after brain and back surgeries, he utilizes this knowledge base to assist students in the application of their studies and wherever they eventually practice nursing.

Hutton has extensive experience working as an emergency room nurse and is well-versed in medical surgical nursing as well as critical care nursing. He is especially interested in promoting wellness and preventing illness.

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 2019, 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; Angela Mulcahy, PhD, RN, CMSRN; Alison Pittman, PhD, RN; Elizabeth Wells-Beede, PhD, RN, C-EFM; and Shelley White-Corey, MSN, RNC, WHNP, CNE.





ADVOCATING WELLNESS

UNDERSERVED WOMEN RECEIVE CANCER SCREENINGS AS STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE

For the last several years, the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) has funded initiatives to promote cancer screenings among underserved Texans while giving future nurses and physicians educational opportunities. One Texas A&M College of Nursing program, in collaboration with a local clinic called Health For All, uses the CPRIT grant funds to provide breast and cervical cancer screenings to women in the Brazos Valley.

Previously, CPRIT awarded the College of Nursing and the Texas A&M College of Medicine a \$1,499,992 grant to be used from 2014 to 2017 for enhanced breast and cervical cancer prevention for low-income and underserved patients using a transdisciplinary collaboration in a family medicine setting. The current grant, awarded in 2017, is \$1,350,000 and lasts through 2020. The college is using part of this grant to fund well-woman screenings at Health For All.

Health For All is a nonprofit, free health care clinic that serves low-income patients in more than 20 counties. Relying primarily on the funding of local donors and volunteers to treat patients, the clinic does not receive state or federal funding. The clinic consistently cares for more than 4,000 patients annually, providing free medical exams, pharmaceuticals, specialist exams, lab tests, X-rays,

chronic disease management education and counseling services. More than 60 percent of their patients are female, single parents and 80 percent of their patients earn less than \$1,500 per month.

“Health For All serves as the primary care clinic for many people without insurance, but historically they provided no well-woman preventive services,” said Cindy Weston, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, associate dean for clinical and outreach affairs and assistant professor at the College of Nursing. “Through the grant funds, we have been able to provide these services by hosting a well-woman clinic about six times per year.”

The college began its family nurse practitioner (FNP) program in 2015, and in that same year, began using Health For All as a training site for both FNP students and Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) students. Since the formation of this collaboration, students from the college—46 FNP students and 72 pre-licensure BSN students—have served 206 women with 156 cervical cancer screenings and 85 referrals to mammography, all at no cost to the patient.

“It provides a true ‘service-learning’ experience in which students serve the community while shoring up their clinical competencies,” Weston added.

The students, under faculty supervision, care for each patient. The FNP students take the lead, doing the exam itself, formulating a plan of care and securing any needed referrals for other services. Meanwhile, the BSN students, who have been working in these clinics as an assignment for their community health course, take vital signs and basic health histories. The BSN students also develop awareness strategies to let women know about these services. As they devise creative ways to spread the word, they also learn more about the barriers to care that many patients face and work to develop strategies to help overcome these challenges.

INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

6 well-woman clinics led annually by students

115+ clinical hours gained by FNP, BSN students since 2015

156 cervical cancer screenings,
85 mammography referrals provided to **206** women

June 2019

This program fills a significant gap in low-income well-woman care and preventive cancer screenings. In Texas, women over the age of 44 are no longer eligible for care through Healthy Texas Women, a Texas Health and Human Services program that provides free breast and cervical cancer screenings for women ages 18 to 44. Similarly, women under the age of 65 are not eligible for Medicare. Therefore, uninsured women in Texas between the ages of 45 and 65 have minimal access to affordable well-woman care and preventive cancer screenings. Unfortunately, many of these women are also in the same age group who should get annual mammograms, according to the American Cancer Society.

To study how well this program works, researchers at the college surveyed the women receiving services at the Health For All clinic, a referring partner of the grant. Published in *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, the reported results showed overall high satisfaction among women served.

Surveys from the study revealed 95 percent satisfaction among the women served, and all of them reported they would refer friends and family.

"It's a collaborative effort between the bachelor's degree students, the FNP students and all of the staff at Health For All, who have been instrumental in making everything happen," Weston said. "Because it seems to be effective and the patients seem satisfied with their care, we hope to continue the program and even expand the services provided."

WALK ON WEDNESDAYS

Whether due to a lack of sidewalks or unsafe neighborhoods, many patients at Health For All do not have a safe place to walk outdoors. Cherrie Pullium, DNP, APRN, ACNS-BC, and Suzanne Van, MSN, RN, CPHQ, both clinical assistant professors at the college, collaborated to find a solution.

Pullium secured patients willing to participate, and Van secured nursing students to help lead the creation of a 10-minute teaching module on healthy diet, benefits of exercise and heart health, taught over a brief walk on the brightly lit sidewalk outside the clinic. Walk on Wednesdays, part of an ongoing research project of Pullium's, investigates how to successfully support patients in translating these structured group sessions into their everyday lives.





BRIDGING THE GAP

PAYING HOUSE CALLS ON RURAL PATIENTS RECENTLY DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL

People living in rural areas often face greater challenges accessing health care compared to those living in cities. In Texas especially, many struggle to access health care due to large distances and lack of access to the internet and reliable transportation. Due to these barriers, patients sometimes wait to seek care, and by then, their conditions have worsened.

That's why new programs to address access are needed. Through Texas A&M College of Nursing's expanding partnership with CHI St. Joseph Health, faculty and students from the college provide house calls to at-risk patients recently discharged from the hospital. The program is staffed by nurse practitioners from the college, two social navigators and a registered nurse navigator from CHI St. Joseph Health, and Texas A&M students specializing in nursing, medicine and pharmacy.

The program helps bridge the gap between care at the hospital and ongoing primary care in the community. "Through the collaboration of CHI St. Joseph Health and partnering health care entities, patients are connected with a primary care provider at the 90-day point after starting home visits," said Cindy Weston, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, associate dean for clinical and outreach affairs and assistant professor at the College of Nursing. "The long-term goal is to get them connected to a permanent health care home."

In spring 2018, the college initially enrolled 10 patients as part of a pilot program. After 30 days of interaction over the phone and in-home visits, none of the high-risk patients were readmitted to the hospital. Within a year, the home visit program officially launched and nursing students aided with the care of 20 patients in April 2019.

"Our students are seeing firsthand how much of a difference they can make in a rural setting," said Jaime Hardy, MSN, RN, FNP-C, director of the home visit program and clinical assistant professor at the college. "In the program's first month, we helped a patient navigate the health care system, gain access to medications and, for those with diabetes, better control their glucose. We also helped a patient treat and manage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, with in-home care, which likely prevented an emergency room visit."

Home visits support patients through assessments and education. Faculty and students help patients understand important elements of their care, including how to properly use medications, monitor their conditions and follow up with care instructions provided at discharge.

In-home visits help address health disparities in rural areas while giving students a new perspective on patient-centered care.

These home visits also provide the health care team with a more complete assessment of the patient's home setting and environment, connecting patients to community resources to help address needs.

"It's really about personalization of health care," said Hardy. "Additionally, it gives our students a whole new level of understanding and compassion for these patients that they can take with them whether they work in home health care or not."

BREAKING THE CYCLE

FOCUS GROUPS SUPPORT WOMEN AND CHILDREN ESCAPING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Women in rural areas of the Rio Grande Valley often find themselves with minimal resources once they leave an abusive relationship. Many are Hispanic and do not have the financial resources to access services for themselves or their children.

In Brownsville, Texas, a town close to the United States–Mexico border, Nora Montalvo-Liendo, PhD, RN, FAAN, assistant professor at Texas A&M College of Nursing, is leading the charge to improve women and children's emotional and social well-being after living with intimate partner violence. "Not enough is being done. We have an urgency to work with the victims of intimate partner violence, especially the children who are exposed," she said.

As lead on a qualitative study interviewing self-identified men of Mexican origin who abused women, she discovered that these men acknowledged children responded with fear or by imitating the abusive language or behavior they witnessed. Some expressed concern their children might be permanently affected and grow up to abuse their intimate partners in the future.

Community partnerships facilitate stability

By partnering with a local women's shelter, Friendship of Women, Inc., Montalvo-Liendo holds group sessions for children, teens and mothers. The Kids and Teens Club meets for a monthly two-hour session and advocates from the shelter facilitate age-appropriate group sessions for kids ages 5 to 8, 9 to 12 and 13 to 17. In the first hour, advocates from the shelter educate the youth groups on healthy relationships and conflict management.

Meanwhile their mothers meet separately with Montalvo-Liendo. The mothers' group teaches skills of how to be present in the moment and rebuild nurturing relationships with their children.

The second hour is spent at a local park as children exert their energy while their moms get to enjoy watching them. This program's comprehensive approach to helping abused mothers care for their children is one of a kind, especially in Brownsville.



Instilling confidence and a sense of community

In a separate decade-long initiative, Montalvo-Liendo and a licensed professional counselor offer bi-weekly peer support groups for women who have survived abuse designed to foster a long-term supportive environment where they can find comfort and reassurance. Many struggle to care for their children as they transition from a life focused solely on survival to one that supports their emotional, physical and financial needs. Sessions offer insight in regaining independence, successfully providing for themselves and their children and taking steps toward breaking the cycle of abuse.

"Many women have a level of disconnect between themselves and their children because they are so focused on survival and meeting the basic needs of their family," Montalvo-Liendo said. "By helping the mothers, we can help improve the social and emotional well-being of themselves and their children. Additionally, we want to find ways to mitigate the intergenerational cycle of abuse."

Montalvo-Liendo, along with Robin Page, PhD, CNM, RN, assistant professor at the College of Nursing, and two colleagues from other institutions are conducting a study on the effects of peer support groups for women survivors of intimate partner violence. The goal is to determine key factors that improved Hispanic women's well-being.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

IMPACTING PATIENTS, THE PROFESSION AND THE POLICY

Texas A&M College of Nursing is poised to become the state and national leader in forensic nursing by improving the health care and the policies that impact survivors. Texas needs more forensic nurses, and the Forensic Nursing Program at the College of Nursing is growing to meet this demand.

The college offers a Master of Science program in forensic nursing. Through the program, students develop the specialized skills and knowledge needed to care for patients impacted by violence and, when appropriate, collect evidence, consult with legal authorities and testify in court. Nurses who graduate from the program will be prepared for leadership roles in a variety of settings including clinics, hospitals, anti-violence organizations, coroners and medical examiners offices.

Undergraduate education

Forensic nursing emphasizes trauma-informed care. This type of care considers the physical and psychological impacts of intentional injury and is sensitive to patients' responses. "Trauma-informed care places the patient and all that they have endured at the center of treatment," said Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, SANE-A, CP-SANE, associate professor with the college. "Recognizing, understanding and responding to the effects of the trauma, while providing the health care and support that the patient needs, promotes healing

and facilitates physical and emotional recovery. All nurses should know how to do this."

Faculty in the Forensic Nursing Program also integrate trauma-informed care into the undergraduate nursing curriculum. Although Texas requires all practicing nurses in an emergency department setting to receive two hours of continuing nursing education on forensic evidence collection, undergraduate nursing students at the college receive a minimum of six and a half hours.

"Nurses from Texas A&M will be better prepared than nurses from most undergraduate programs to care for patients impacted by trauma," Downing said. "Forensic nurses play an important role facilitating justice for survivors of violence. They integrate patient care with the evidentiary needs of justice."

Rural and underserved areas

Currently only 357 sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) practice in Texas, and 84 percent of Texas counties do not have a SANE. With the upward trend in violent crimes across the state, Texas communities have a growing need for registered nurses to become SANE certified. In addition to the college's graduate program in forensic nursing, the state needs continuing education in forensic health care for registered nurses and multi-disciplinary

education for nurses, law enforcement, social workers and advocates.

“Enhancing the knowledge and skills of Texas nurses to help them provide better patient care for survivors is the goal,” said Laurie Charles, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, CA-CPSANE, CHSE, clinical assistant professor at the college. “Wherever a nurse is in their career, they can benefit from our courses or programs.”

The college provides various continuing education courses throughout the year and is the contracted provider for SANE training for the state of Texas. In addition, the college hosts regional conferences on human trafficking for multi-disciplinary forensic professionals.

Recently, the college received a \$1.47 million three-year grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services to recruit and train nurses from rural and underserved areas in Texas to become SANEs with certification in adult care, along with forensic nurses currently in practice for enhanced experimental learning or certification.



The college hosts human trafficking conferences across Texas to educate law enforcement, social services, health care, and advocacy professionals—groups who commonly encounter human trafficking victims.

“These conferences help victims from across the state. Recently, we had a probation officer who attended our conference recognize a teenage probationer as being trafficked,” said Charles (above). “She learned to recognize the signs and successfully help victims.”

“We establish partnerships with existing SANE programs to identify preceptors, mentors and clinical opportunities for nurses enrolled in the course,” said Stacey Mitchell, DNP, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, clinical associate professor and coordinator of the Forensic Health Care Program at the college. “As our project grows, we will provide coaching, debriefing and continuing education for all participants to enhance the level of forensic nursing care provided across the state.”

Legislation and policymaking

Forensic nursing faculty from the college help to shape state and national policies through their leadership and service.

“We often provide input on legislation that involves health or justice for survivors of violent crime,” Mitchell said. “That may include testifying before the state legislature, or reviewing and providing comments on proposed bills.”

“Although it is true that policy directs health care, the best practices in health care should inform policy makers,” Mitchell said. “It is important to have nurses engaged in influencing and making policy. It is an extension of nursing’s role in patient care, education and advocacy.”

“

With a renewed emphasis on interprofessional and interdisciplinary opportunities to collaborate, our nurses are positively influencing how communities are accessing lifesaving health screenings and education, at both the caregiver and patient levels.

JANE BOLIN



NURSING RESEARCH

USING PATIENT-CENTERED INQUIRY TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Nurses are often the first to interact with patients, gaining their trust to treat illnesses, serve as educators on treatment options and help formulate a path to wellness. With their unique perspective, nurses offer valuable yet underutilized experiences that can help shape scientifically and clinically viable outcomes in addressing inequitable access to health care, both in terms of treatment and education. Identifying the root causes of these disparities in health care accessibility, specifically among rural and other underserved populations, is of special interest to Jane N. Bolin, JD, PhD, BSN, Texas A&M College of Nursing associate dean for research.

The \$2.8 million grant was received as one of seven cooperative research center agreements funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.

Bolin brings a wealth of expertise in nursing, law, public health, research and interdisciplinary collaboration to the position. Each supports the college’s vision of extending the historical land-grant mission of Texas A&M University, remaining dedicated to developing new understanding and approaches to health care, and preparing students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Bolin has led several funded projects, research initiatives and intervention plans for rural and underserved populations nationally and within Texas.

Bolin is currently the principal investigator (PI) for the Texas A&M Southwest Rural Health Research Center (SRHRC), which received a four-year, \$2.8 million grant as one of seven cooperative research center agreements funded nationally by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to research critical health issues facing rural populations. She is co-PI on a recently funded HRSA grant to assist vulnerable rural hospitals as well as co-PI with the College of Nursing associate dean for clinical and outreach affairs, Cindy Weston, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, on two Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) grants focusing on colorectal, breast and cervical cancer screenings, education and outreach in rural and underserved regions of Texas. These cancer control projects utilize family nurse practitioners and students to improve cancer screening.

“The scope of practice for nurse practitioners is expanding, and it will continue to do so. It is inevitable,” Bolin said. “You will continue to see nurses more and more on the front line.” As patient-centered caregivers, nurses have an intimate knowledge of their patients’ questions and apprehensions with regard to health care options, accessibility and treatment plans. Bolin is personally privy to this, having worked as a nurse before translating these experiences into academia, where she teaches health law and ethics through the Texas A&M School of Public Health and serves as a director of the SRHRC. She feels that these experiences set nurses apart and exemplify the significant contributions nurses bring to innovative research practices: emphasis is placed on the clinical and population outcomes; the true impact and influence on patients through the application of research findings. Nurses are in the field, collecting measurable data and identifying trends that provide the landscape where teaching models can be restructured, community outreach efforts can be analyzed and general adaptations to better serve the needs of patients can be developed.

Empowering community partners through education and evidence-based resources remains at the forefront of nursing research. Funded since 2002,

COLORECTAL SCREENINGS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING RESULTS

2,236 total colonoscopy screenings provided	177,033 lay persons reached indirectly
35% had abnormal pathology	12,265 lay persons educated directly (face-to-face)
25% revealed cancer precursors	41,491 professionals reached indirectly
18 people diagnosed with colorectal cancer	1,873 students & professionals trained directly

December 2011–August 2018

in 2011 Bolin collaborated with other professional colleges across the Texas A&M Health Science Center and received a \$3.2 million CPRIT grant for colorectal cancer screenings, and, two years later, received the first of the Health Science Center's breast and cervical cancer screening grants involving both the College of Nursing and College of Medicine. Bolin has successfully launched Texas C-STEP, the Cancer Screening, Training, Education and Prevention program, as an interdisciplinary initiative with the College of Nursing, College of Medicine and School of Public Health.

Empowering community partners through education and evidence-based resources remains at the forefront of nursing research.

This program continues to prove value and return on investment by consistently exceeding the minimum recommendations set by the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) for colorectal cancer screenings. The program provides essential prevention education and critical colorectal, breast and cervical cancer safety-net services, including screenings and related diagnostics, to low-income, uninsured and underinsured residents of Texas. Co-investigator Weston serves an integral role in

developing relationships, focusing on women's health outreach and established opportunities across the state with hopes of expanding the program's reach with an inter-university consortium.

The ACTION Project (Access to Cancer Training, Information, Outreach and Navigation) established state-certified community health worker (CHW) training based on four prior CPRIT projects. This component of Texas C-STEP created deliverables for bilingual, bicultural CHWs and instructors to continue engaging rural and medically underserved communities both in research and practice. The curriculum developed offers 41 CEU hours for CHWs, available in English and Spanish, is available free of charge and is DSHS-approved to maintain Texas state CHW certification. In less than seven years, 746 CHWs completed the self-paced CEU modules online; 45 CHW instructors completed the "Train the Trainer" CEU module taught by ACTION instructors; and 341 CHWs attended in-person training workshops taught or co-taught by ACTION instructors.

Making an impact through the translation of data to real-life application is demonstrated by another initiative co-developed by Bolin, the Diabetes Education Kiosk (Diosk). The research team recognized the importance of closing the gap between patients and their lack of knowledge about this chronic disease. The touch-screen module offers a dual-language platform allowing patients to engage with accurate yet conversationally conveyed facts about diabetes. The information, presented in writing

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: LINNAE HUTCHISON



Linnae Hutchison, MBA, MT, director of research for the Texas A&M College of Nursing Research Office, serves as the lead in organizing, documenting and submitting grant proposals on behalf of the college. In the last academic year, more than \$2 million in grant funding has been awarded to the college.

as well as video form, takes into consideration two primary barriers that prevent awareness: language and literacy. Due to the success of the module, the Diosk was expanded to include information to help patients learn about living with asthma, infectious disease and gestational diabetes, a common thread of health issues identified within the initial outreach population the cohort seeks to reduce through patient-centered self-education.

To continue advancing research in the field of nursing through interdisciplinary investigation, Bolin sits on the research team seeking to test the effectiveness of spectroscopic breath analysis in diagnosing lung cancer earlier and more efficiently. Using specific biomarkers, preliminary research findings suggest the sampling of exhaled breath content will provide data needed to detect the likelihood of lung cancer, resulting in earlier identification of precursors for lung cancer, as well as diagnostics in patients. This type of sampling provides a noninvasive, pain-free and cost effective method that could significantly impact the ability for patients to access lifesaving cancer pre-screenings in rural and underserved areas, where cancer mortality rates are historically higher.

Bolin's most recent efforts to expand research in nursing include a \$200,000 federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant. She and an interdisciplinary Health Science Center research team were awarded funds to work with communities to assess the needs and options viable for opioid use disorder prevention and treatment in rural counties in the Texas Coastal Bend region. The team will focus on understanding the scope of opioid use disorder in the region, especially its impact on children. Furthermore, they will analyze the existing prevention, treatment and recovery resources available, and create a plan to improve access to services and care.

"Research in the College of Nursing is more visible than ever before, and that speaks to the meaningful contributions being made by our college," Bolin said. "With a renewed emphasis on interprofessional and interdisciplinary opportunities to collaborate, our nurses are positively influencing how communities are accessing lifesaving health screenings and education, both at the caregiver and patient levels."



The scope of practice for nurse practitioners is expanding, and it will continue to do so. It is inevitable. You will continue to see nurses more and more on the front line.

JANE BOLIN

WOMEN'S HEALTH SCREENINGS, EDUCATION & TRAINING RESULTS

March 2014–August 2018



2,629 screenings

exams, mammograms, ultrasounds



291 procedures

colposcopies, loop electrosurgical excision procedures (LEEPs)



169 diagnoses

patients diagnosed with cancer precursors, cancer

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

Success in reducing barriers to preventive health care is magnified through strategic training and community outreach initiatives for nurses in rural, underserved areas.



171,862

lay persons reached



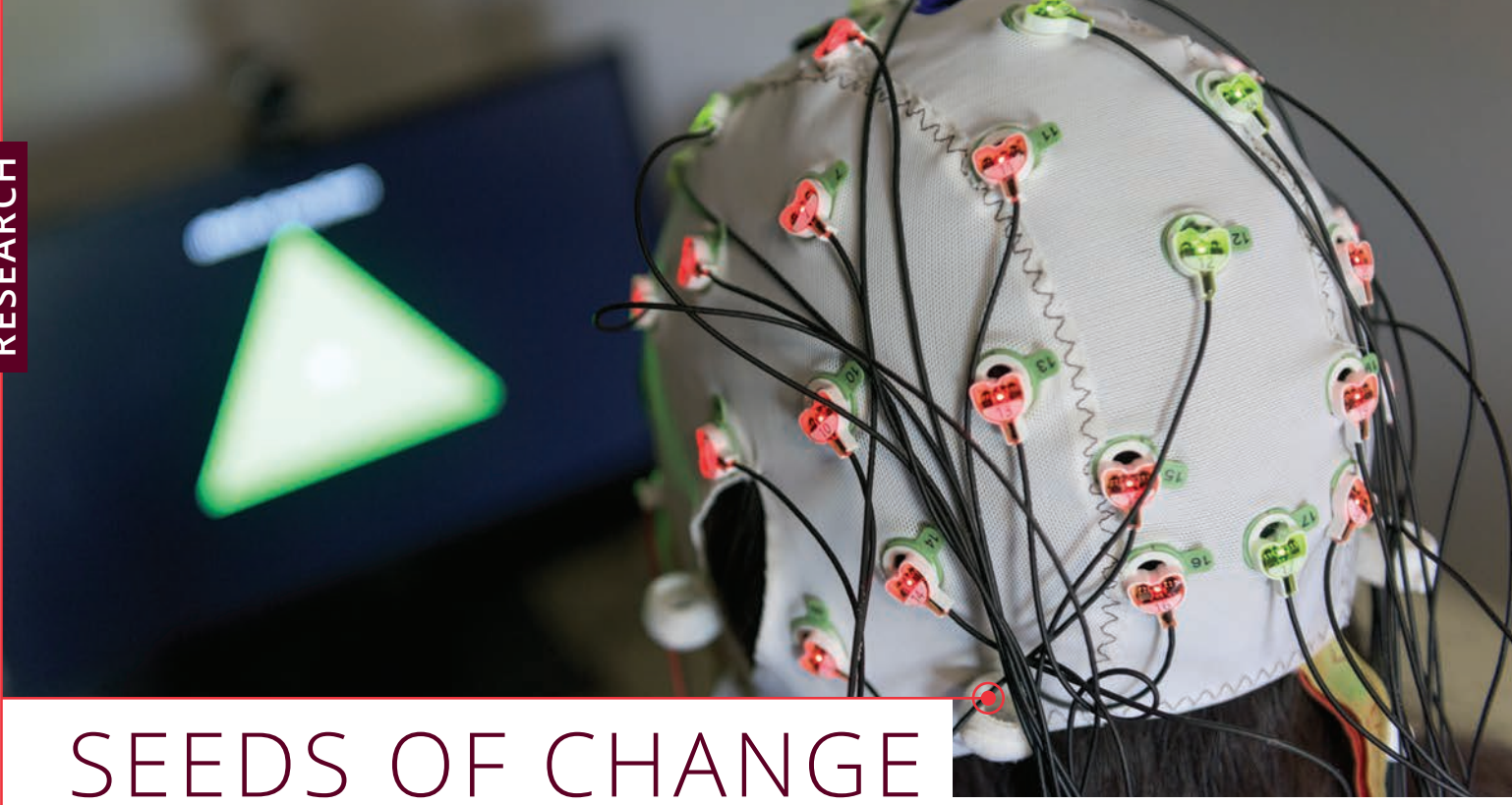
42,099

professionals reached indirectly



908

students & health professionals trained



SEEDS OF CHANGE

NURSING RESEARCH SEED GRANTS ALLOW STUDY OF WAYS TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

Texas A&M Triads for Transformation (T3) program, helps move ideas from a vision to proof of concept. The research teams applying for T3 funding must be made up of three faculty members from at least two different Texas A&M colleges. The winners use \$30,000 seed funds over the course of 12 to 24 months to develop long-term research and scholarship collaborations.

Three teams with faculty members from the Texas A&M College of Nursing were funded in the first two rounds of the program. All three are working on ways to improve women's physical and mental health and well-being.

Can emergency contraception prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following sexual assault?

In the first round of grants, Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, SANE-A, CP-SANE, associate professor in the Forensic Nursing Program at the College of Nursing, put together a T3 team with Annmarie MacNamara, PhD, assistant professor, and Mary Meagher, PhD, professor, both at the Texas A&M College of Liberal Arts Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Together, they are studying the effect hormones can have on post-traumatic stress disorder. "Women have higher rates of PTSD, regardless of the origin of the trauma," Downing said. "This trend hints that female hormones may play a role in its development."

Early research suggests women who were at the mid-luteal phase of their menstrual cycle—when progesterone levels are highest—had higher rates of PTSD than women who were in the lower progesterone phase at the time they experienced sexual assault. In addition, women taking oral contraception before they presented for a sexual assault exam and women who were given emergency contraception during the exam had lower levels of some common PTSD symptoms than women who did not use or declined the use of hormonal contraception.

T3 provides \$30,000 in funding to groups of three faculty members to stimulate and support innovative research.

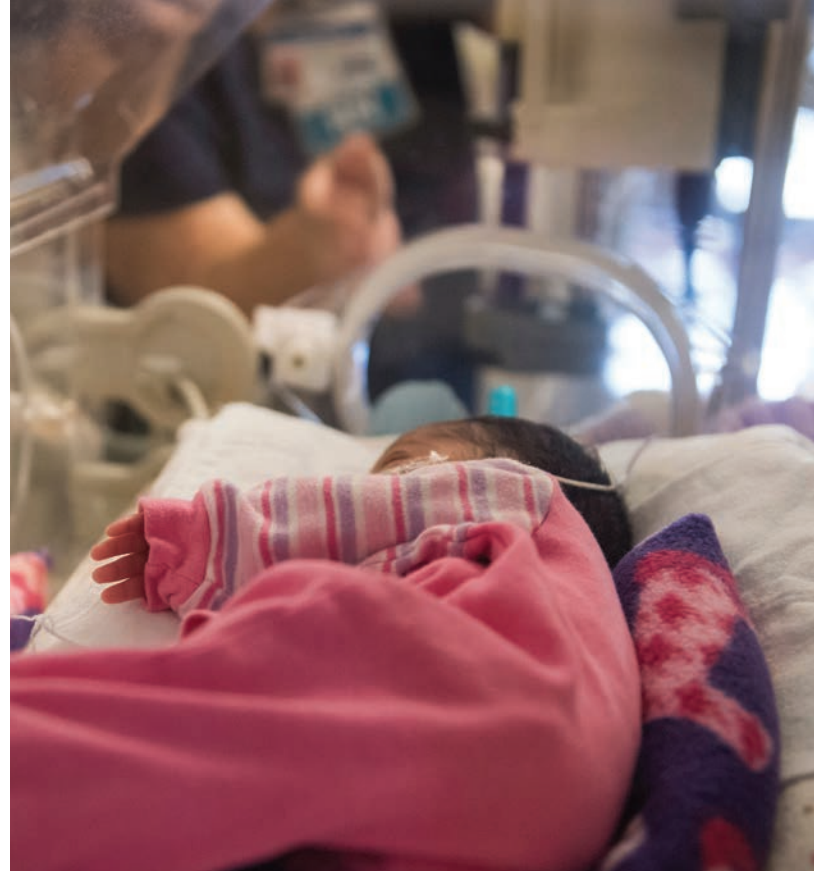
"If high progesterone levels are positively correlated with a higher likelihood of PTSD, then sexual assault examiners may need to reconsider what types of emergency contraception they prescribe," Downing said. "Most types of emergency contraception manipulate progesterone, so it may be a good tool to help prevent PTSD."

In her current study, Downing and the team measure female volunteers' brain activity and hormones during a classic fear conditioning experiment. The researchers hope to uncover more information about the relationship between hormones and the likelihood of developing symptoms of PTSD to suggest interventions that can be integrated into a sexual assault examination.

Genetic testing: Views from pregnant Hispanic women

Robin Page, PhD, CNM, RN, and Nora Montalvo-Liendo, RN, PhD, FAAN, both assistant professors at the college, teamed with Lei-Shih Chen, PhD, associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development, to explore pregnant Hispanic/Latina women's views on genetic testing of their babies. Such testing, whether pre-implantation (in the case of in vitro fertilization), prenatally or soon after birth, is commonly available. These tests can identify genetic conditions or disorders, but they also raise ethical, legal and social concerns.

Because much of the genetic testing technology is so new, there has been limited research on people's opinions of it, especially among underrepresented groups. The team is working to change that by conducting in-depth interviews on women's perspectives, experience with genetic testing, decision making regarding undergoing different



genetic testing, continuation or termination of pregnancies and treatment plans for their children. The ultimate goal is to use what they learn to help establish guidelines for appropriate genetic testing.

The lived experience of being a pregnant black woman in Texas

Sharon Dormire, PhD, RN, and Jodie Gary, PhD, RN, professor and assistant professor at the college, respectively, teamed with Idethia Harvey, DrPH, an associate professor in the College of Education and Human Development, to study black women's perception of stressors they experience during pregnancy that may contribute to poor pregnancy outcomes.

Black women have more than double the risk for maternal mortality, preterm birth and having a low birthweight infant when compared with the national average—which is already much higher than in other developed countries. Racism, poverty, health care access and lifestyle choices are commonly identified factors influencing this disparity, but they cannot entirely explain the problem.

That's why this team is trying to identify the repeated psychological and physiological adversities that pregnant black women experience and to give voice to their perspectives that contribute to racial disparities in pregnancy outcomes.





SHEDDING LIGHT

STUDYING AN INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUE IN THE FORENSIC NURSING TOOLKIT

When someone is physically hurt, their bruising is a way to corroborate and “prove” to the outside world that a trauma occurred. But what happens when these markers are invisible to the naked eye in normal clinical lighting?

Some forensic nurses have been experimenting with using different wavelengths of light to detect older bruises. However, no one has systematically looked at how different factors, such as skin color and the age of the injury, can affect its usefulness—until now.

Daniel J. Sheridan, PhD, FNE-A, RN, FAAN, professor at the Texas A&M College of Nursing, sees differences in the visibility of bruises as a

health disparities issue. “You can have someone who is very dark-skinned and therefore the whole criminal justice system sometimes minimizes what happened because you can’t see the damage,” Sheridan said. He partnered with his former doctoral student, Katherine Scafide, PhD, RN, now an assistant professor at George Mason University, to begin a multi-site trial to systematically study bruising.

The research included healthy adults of different skin tones who volunteered to be shot in the arm with a paintball pellet. “We know that paintballs cause a deep bruise,” Sheridan said. “We can track accurate color changes of that bruising over time using another tool called a spectrophotometer.”

For comparison, those same subjects were also slightly bruised on the other arm using a ball bearing. Sheridan and his colleagues examined both arms of each person using ambient and alternate light of different wavelengths, a total of 21 times over the four weeks after the injury.

"It will hopefully establish, once and for all, that using alternative light to inspect bruises is a valid clinical practice," Sheridan said. "We hope our results can guide forensic science and criminal justice policy to make this evidence important in the courtroom, to add credibility to the history of patients who have had multiple victimizations."



PERIOPERATIVE PIPELINE

ESTABLISHES COLLABORATIVE PROJECT WITH SETON WILLIAMSON

In collaboration with Seton Williamson, the Texas A&M College of Nursing's Round Rock location has established a "perioperative pipeline" program. Strategically designed to meet the growing need for operating room nurses, this specialized nursing track helps provide hospitals in the Austin area with nurses equipped with specific didactic and clinical experiences upon graduation. This collaboration also provides a commitment of clinical sites for the education of pre-licensure students in areas dedicated to the College of Nursing in areas where both traditional clinical skills and those specific to perioperative areas beyond observation are available.

Students with high academic achievement and a demonstrated interest in pursuing a career in the perioperative environment are selected to participate and complete Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) fundamentals modules before completing an additional 150 clinical hours in pre-op, intra-op and post-op areas. After this clinical experience, graduates are prepared for entry-level positions in the perioperative field.



160,000 perioperative nurses in the U.S.



DISASTER DAY

LARGEST STUDENT-LED INTERPROFESSIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SIMULATION IN U.S.

Started by the Texas A&M College of Nursing, the Texas A&M Health Science Center conducts an annual Disaster Day, which marked its 11th year in 2019. It is designed to give future health care and public health professionals experience working together in a disaster scenario.

The one-day event, which is carefully planned and executed by Health Science Center students with oversight from a faculty and staff steering committee, provides students with critical life-saving skills required in disaster situations.

More than 600 Texas A&M students participate annually.

Not only are participants better prepared to respond in real-life emergencies, but they also learn vital skills to practice collaboratively. Since 2018 the event has been held at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service's (TEEX) Brayton Fire Training Field and Disaster City, a 52-acre training facility for emergency responders.

A new scenario is selected each year and kept secret until event day to provide the realism of an unexpected situation. For example the 2018 event was a train crash, and the 2019 event simulated a chemical explosion and building collapse where

nearly 600 students from the Texas A&M College of Medicine, College of Nursing, Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, School of Public Health and the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences engaged in triage at the disaster site, patient care at a mock field hospital and disaster management and simulation oversight at Disaster City's Emergency Operations Training Center.

The students had to react to mass "injuries" with volunteers in makeup portraying victims with varying degrees of wounds, from cuts to compound fractures. The volunteers mimicked panicked patients as they screamed, cried and pleaded for help. At the end of each exercise, instructors and other observers critiqued student teams on their strategy and communication to help improve their skills for a real-life disaster.

"Disaster Day is one of the most impressive and innovative interdisciplinary collaborations as the nation's largest student-led, interprofessional emergency response simulation, providing nursing students with the unique opportunity to effectively test their knowledge and skills in the field," said Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean and professor for the college. "We are fortunate to have the resources available to offer and expand this transformational exercise to help prepare our students in effectively working together, no matter the situation, to deliver the best patient-centered care possible."

SIMULATION EXPANSION

OPPORTUNITIES ENGAGE STUDENTS, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN CENTRAL TEXAS

The Texas A&M College of Nursing joined major hospital systems in the Austin area to plan and implement a regional mass casualty disaster drill. Both students and faculty were included in the disaster drill as all were deployed to various sites in the region to perform numerous roles.

Several branches of Ascension Seton Medical Center's health system, St. David's Medical Center, the Round Rock police department, area paramedics and other emergency responders all took part. College of Nursing was the only nursing school participating, with more than 80 students total and more than 60 students in moulage (make-up simulating injuries).

Disaster planning was conducted by Ann Utterback, PhD, RN, CNE, clinical associate professor and assistant dean of the Round Rock location. Utterback helped students to understand the experience of their various roles in the disaster simulation. First-year students participated in a closed point of distribution exercise that included packaging radiation prophylaxis medication, and then administering that medication to all persons present throughout a hospital (except real patients). Mid-program students participated as victims of injuries related to the terrorist activity and were appropriately moulaged and trained in individual case histories. Graduating senior students served as drill evaluators in 11 urban and rural hospitals in the region that also participated in the drill. Additionally,

six students and a master's student in nursing education assisted in the set up and organization of the family reunification center. They assisted hospital staff in organizing the area and also interviewed families as they arrived to assess distinguishing characteristics so their loved one might be located in the hospital. They were able to debrief with staff and discuss ways to improve this process in the future.

The drill commenced as students were routed to the entrance of the emergency department where a station was set up for decontamination. Each victim went through the process, and upon completion of the drill, a debriefing session was held with all participants (students, staff and safety personnel).



DISASTER TRAINING PREPARED FORMER STUDENT TO RESPOND IN LAS VEGAS

On October 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire on an outdoor country music festival in Las Vegas, Nevada. In just a few minutes, 58 people died and more than 700 were injured and rushed to area hospitals. At one of those emergency departments, Nicole Mancuso '14, BSN '16, was waiting to care for the wounded.

"It was probably the worst thing I have ever seen in my life, and I hope I never have to see it again," Mancuso said. "High adrenaline and a sense of duty helped me keep my composure. You have to stay calm in these situations, for the sake of the patient."

Mancuso said she used training learned during Disaster Day. "The simulation taught me how to appropriately triage mass casualties and treat patients properly."

She has begun a master's program to become a family nurse practitioner and plans to receive certification as an emergency nurse practitioner to provide care in hospital emergency departments.



BLEEDING MAROON

STUDENT LEADERS EMBRACE AGGIE CORE VALUES TO PROMOTE NURSING

The Texas A&M College of Nursing Ambassador Program offers opportunities for networking, professional development, public speaking, team work and leadership growth. This select cohort of nurses commits to participating in a number of activities each semester in which they engage peers and visitors in learning about the unique qualities, attributes and amenities offered at both the Bryan-College Station and Round Rock locations.

Serving as advocates for the College of Nursing, student ambassadors are selected through an application process and have the distinct

responsibility of showcasing the college to donors, legislators and constituents through site visits, tours, symposiums and presentations. Qualified students are those earning a traditional or second-degree Bachelor of Science in nursing, with at least two semesters remaining, and who have a minimum 3.0 GPA. Ambassadors are chosen for their professionalism and enthusiasm in positively representing the entire student body through a demonstrated commitment to the mission and core values of Texas A&M University: excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service.

One area of focus concentrates on highlighting each location's state-of-the-art Clinical Learning Resource Center (CLRC). These simulation labs offer an innovative learning environment for nursing students, providing realistic set ups where manikins and standardized patients serve as key components in students obtaining hands-on skills training. Student ambassadors are called upon to guide special guests through the expansive centers that mimic real-life medical facilities with areas simulating critical care units, exam rooms and other common features of a health care facility.

Ambassadors are chosen for their professionalism, enthusiasm and a demonstrated commitment to the mission and core values of Texas A&M University.

To engage the current student body, ambassadors coordinate and serve on panels to answer questions, provide valuable feedback from the point of view of a nursing student and generate a welcoming dialogue to support their peers. These discussions offer a foundation for navigating nursing school and the degree programs offered; awareness of student leadership roles to foster professional development; and insight on the strength and impact of the Aggie network.



STUDENTS ATTEND NURSE DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Thirteen nursing students from the college attended the Texas Nurses Association's Nurse Day at the state Capitol in Austin, Texas. They were accompanied by Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing, and Laurie Charles, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, CA-CPSANE, CHSE, clinical assistant professor at the college.

To start the day, students learned about various nursing bills being proposed or voted on by the Texas legislators. Afterward, the group was invited to speak with a Texas state representative's staff about the importance of nursing and health policy.



FORENSIC NURSING ADVOCACY DAY ON THE HILL

In February 2019, Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, SANE-A, CP-SANE, associate professor at the college, attended the International Association of Forensic Nurses' Forensic Nursing Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. She had the opportunity to personally speak with U.S. Representative Bill Flores, Texas A&M University Class of 1976. They discussed the college's efforts to improve care for sexual assault survivors.



CARING SPIRIT

NURSING STUDENT MAKES HISTORY AS MASCOT'S FIRST FEMALE HANDLER

Mia Miller holds a very special title as a member of the Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets' Company E-2. Selected as the first female to serve as mascot corporal, Miller held the prestigious rank responsible for Reveille, the university's mascot and highest-ranking member of the Corps. Now, she is attending the Texas A&M College of Nursing as a step toward achieving her dream of becoming a naval nurse serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Miller has always wanted to join the Marines, and as a recipient of the Marine Corps ROTC scholarship, she had three choices for her collegiate career. She wasn't familiar with the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets until just before she began her first semester at the university. She learned of the opportunities within Company E-2 during a meeting with her military advisor who recommended she take on the challenge and consider applying to be the mascot corporal. Although hesitant at first, Miller chose to act on this recommendation and decided it would be an opportunity that aligned with her academic aspirations. After an extensive audition process that involved studying the history of Reveille, writing essays and delivering speeches, Miller was selected by her peers in Company E-2 to serve as Reveille IX's 2018-2019 handler.

As Reveille's handler, Miller quickly learned just how significant her role was to Aggies. Her days began and ended with Reveille at her side, beginning with formation on the quad every morning followed by

breakfast and, of course, classes. Miller adapted her schedule in traveling to and from classes and to events knowing it was necessary to allot additional time for passersby enamored by the "first lady" of Aggieland. Miller realized that by caring for Reveille, she was not only preparing herself for success by navigating unexpected challenges; she was also positively impacting the lives of each person that stopped to greet her and Reveille.

Her time as mascot corporal came to a close during Family Weekend 2019, an annual event that began in 1919. Miller's time in caring for Reveille may have ended, but it also marked the beginning of a very important chapter where she will maintain her commitment to selfless service: becoming an Aggie nurse and serving as a naval nurse.



RAISING THE BAR

INTERPROFESSIONAL CLARION TEAM WINS THIRD AT NATIONAL COMPETITION

Macy Anderson, a student in the College of Nursing, was a member of the Texas A&M Health Science Center team that won third place at the 2019 National CLARION Case Competition. The competition, which presents teams with a complex health care case and requires them to create a root cause analysis, was held at the University of Minnesota. The third-place finish granted the students a shared scholarship award of \$2,500.

Student teams, all of which had members from at least two disciplines, presented their root cause analyses on the assigned case, "Home is Where the Health Is," to a panel of judges that evaluated them in the context of real-world standards of practice. The team had earned the opportunity to compete at the national level due to their win at the Texas A&M-wide competition.

Joining Anderson on the Texas A&M team were Travis Burdick (School of Public Health) and Soumya Pathrui (College of Medicine). Jerry Carrino, PhD, MPH, instructional professor at the School of Public Health, served as the team's advisor. The local competition, hosted by the Office of Interprofessional Education & Research, provided a fun and competitive stage to help hone communication and problem-solving skills.

CLARION case competitions were created in response to issues of quality and patient safety in health care. Medical errors are the third-leading cause of death in the United States and are estimated to account for more than 250,000 deaths annually.

The National Academy of Medicine has cited poor communication and a lack of teamwork as contributors to these errors, and it suggested that interprofessional education is a key to reducing these deaths. This has brought interprofessional education to the forefront of health care curriculums across the nation.



Macy Anderson



Travis Burdick



Soumya Pathrui

STUDENTS SELECTED FOR RISING STARS OF RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Student nurses Sarah Ashley Interrante, Rachel Victoria Johnstone and Lindsey M. Moyer, MPH, were selected as inaugural participants in the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing event Rising Stars of Research and Scholarship. These students served as research assistants to College of Nursing faculty including Sharon Dormire, PhD, RN, Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, CP-SANE, SANE-A, and Daniel Sheridan, PhD, RN, FNE, SANE-A, FAAN.

The students each presented their individual research with separate posters during the Rising Stars poster session at the 2019 Creating Healthy Work Environments Conference. The event was designed to provide an opportunity to elevate the scholarly contributions of students to the nursing profession.

The honor society is the second-largest nursing organization in the world with more than 135,000 active members in more than 90 countries. Its mission is advancing world health and celebrating nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership and service. The college's chapter has been a member of Sigma Theta Tau International since 2011.



NANCY DOWNING

REAPPOINTED TO TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

In 2016, Nancy Downing, PhD, RN, SANE-A, CP-SANE, associate professor at the Texas A&M College of Nursing, became the first forensic nurse, forensic nurse scientist and nurse educator to serve on the Texas Forensic Science Commission. Reappointed by Texas State Governor Greg Abbott in 2019, Downing plays a vital role in advocating for and supporting forensic nurses, as well as supporting the integrity of the forensic science process.

The commission provides oversight for Texas crime laboratories and other entities conducting forensic analyses for use in criminal investigation and prosecution. Additionally, the commission accredits crime labs and licenses forensic analysts

to ensure integrity, reviews conviction appeals based on potentially problematic forensic analyses or testimony and provides guidance in establishing procedures, policies and practices that improve the quality of forensic science in Texas and the nation.

Forensic nursing bridges the gap between health care and justice.

The commission is also responsible for investigating allegations of professional negligence or misconduct that could potentially affect substantially a forensic analysis or legal outcome, and they implement a reporting system for concerns related to negligence or misconduct.

Downing's role as a commission member positions the college to remain at the forefront in offering timely expertise and evidence-based research findings related to forensic nursing. "It is important that our students are mindful of the responsibility they have to provide patient-centered care while also adhering to the highest level of professional forensic standards," Downing said. "Forensic nursing bridges the gap between health care and justice."





MARTIN MUFICH

HONORED A SECOND TIME FOR IMPACT ON STUDENT VETERANS

The Veteran Resource and Support Center at Texas A&M University recognized Martin Mufich, MSN, RN, CHSE, clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Nursing, for his mentorship, inspiration and overall positive impact on student veterans. Mufich was honored along with two other members of the Texas A&M Health Science Center.

The experiences of veterans not only enlighten fellow students, but also faculty.

In deciding who should be selected, the Veteran Resource and Support Center asks each graduating veteran one simple question: "Who had the greatest impact on your success at Texas A&M University?"

"Over the past five years, one comment we repeatedly heard from our student veterans is that they are extremely grateful for the support they receive from our faculty, staff and advisors," said Col. Gerald L. Smith '82, director of the Veteran Resource and Support Center. "These dedicated and caring faculty and staff have been an inspiration, mentor, confidant and a positive influence. It is because of their dedicated professionalism that

we are now recognized as 'distinction of choice' for student veteran success."

This recognition marks the second time Mufich received this honor. "I am very honored and humbled to receive this recognition. I am eternally grateful for our veterans, who have given so much to our country," Mufich said. "I am glad the College of Nursing can help them utilize their previous training and skills to provide patient care in a civilian setting. Their background experiences not only enlighten their fellow students, but also their faculty."





REBECCA BURNS

SELECTED 2019 DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Teaching aspiring nurses to provide the highest level of quality care while remaining compassionate and patient-centered is a natural talent for Rebecca Burns, DNP, RN, clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Nursing, who leads by example through selfless service.

On an annual basis, Texas A&M University and The Association of Former Students recognize members of the school's faculty and staff who exhibit the highest standards of excellence. Burns, recognized in the category of Individual Student Engagement for the 2019 Distinguished Achievement Award, was selected for her commitment in developing professional relationships with students that help and inspire while balancing the need for students to accept

their responsibilities and strive to meet their own potentials. This prestigious award recognizes her willingness to go above and beyond in giving time and effort to each of her student's professional growth and opportunities.

Burns transforms the skills and aptitude of each student through innovative, relatable pedagogy offering a challenging yet fulfilling opportunity to increase their knowledge base and enhance their abilities as nurses post-graduation. "Watching my students' progress and witnessing their passion for serving the needs of others is inspiring," Burns said. "We are fortunate to have such enthusiastic, driven and compassionate nurses who seek to offer the best care possible for their patients."

COLLEGE NAMED NLN CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

The National League of Nursing (NLN) recognized the Texas A&M College of Nursing as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education in 2016 for creating environments that enhance student learning and professional development. This inaugural recognition remains in place through 2020 when the college is eligible to and will apply for re-designation for an additional five years. Only 64 institutions hold the NLN Center of Excellence in Nursing Education designation, and of those, Texas A&M is one of only five institutions within Texas.



**National League
for Nursing**
Center of Excellence in Nursing Education



STACEY MITCHELL

RECOGNIZED FOR EXTRAORDINARY PATIENT CARE

In 2018, the Good Samaritan Foundation announced Stacey Mitchell, DNP, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, FAAN, clinical associate professor at the Texas A&M College of Nursing, as a bronze medalist for an Excellence in Nursing Award. The 14th Annual Excellence in Nursing Awards Luncheon celebrated and recognized outstanding nurses—including Mitchell—in education and clinical practice in Houston, Texas, as well as the surrounding area.

Anyone—whether a physician, fellow nurse, grateful patient or family member—can nominate a nurse for their passion, leadership, mentorship and service to the communities of Texas. The Good Samaritan Foundation describes the award as a recognition of nurses “who are leaders at the bedside offering extraordinary and compassionate care and service.”

They focus on highlighting the stories and the impact of the nurse rather than the amount of degrees, certifications or research.

Established in 1951, the foundation has become the largest private grantor of scholarships to Texas nursing students with a steadfast mission “to increase the number of highly-trained and dedicated nurses at the bedside of Texas patients.” Recognizing nurses like Mitchell who continue to make significant contributions in advancing the field of nursing aligns with the foundation’s commitment to attract men and women to the profession.

BACCALAUREATE, GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS ACCREDITED BY CCNE

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>). The initial five-year accreditation of the baccalaureate program established in 2008 was awarded in 2009, followed by reaccreditation in 2014 for an additional 10 years. The initial five-year accreditation of graduate degree programs was earned in 2015.





PAVING THE WAY

SUE AND JOE KNOWLES '50, MD, SHARE INSIGHT ON VALUE OF TEAMWORK

Sue and Joe Knowles '50, MD, established a \$7 million planned gift creating endowed scholarships for the College of Nursing and College of Medicine—a way for the couple to honor the importance of teamwork among health care professionals. As the largest individual gift ever made in support of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center, the couple made history providing scholarships that will follow recipients until they graduate. This endowment serves as a catalyst in preparing the next generation of medical professionals to serve rural areas and close the gap in health care accessibility for underserved populations.

In 1946, Joe Knowles began his undergraduate degree at Texas A&M, then earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical School at Galveston and served in the U.S. Air Force. As one of the first students to pass exams and obtain his certification in the Academy of Family Practice, Joe Knowles fervently served the rural community of Borger, Texas, for 30 years.

“No matter where you are working in a medical setting, doctors and nurses are a team,” said Joe Knowles. He said that this is especially true when serving in the military and rural areas. Sue

and Joe Knowles recognized the colleges' efforts to offer strategically planned interprofessional training to students, noting this commitment to teamwork and trust across disciplines helped them solidify their decision to support his alma mater.

"Joe's mom had eight siblings; all but the oldest went to college," Sue Knowles explained. "After each child got their degree, they would help the younger sibling through school. It was a sacrifice for each sibling. These days that isn't possible—there is so much debt—especially within the health care professions."

Commitment to teamwork, interdisciplinary education solidified Knowles' decision to support his alma mater.

This planned gift was created to provide financial support to students, helping them remain focused on earning their degree to provide patient-centered care to rural areas.

In 2018, they created the Sue and Joe Knowles '50 Endowed Scholarship, providing two endowments totaling \$750,000 for the College of Nursing and College of Medicine. Kelly Xavier and Lettie Hottell-Lantsheer were the first recipients of the College of Nursing inaugural scholarship. The couple has gifted an additional \$125,000 endowment in 2019 for students specifically in the College of Nursing.

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 and support your alma mater:
nursing.tamhsc.edu/alumni-friends



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.



1,272
nursing graduates since 2008



99%
students that successfully graduate



20+
scholarships offered by college donors

Visit **nursing.tamhsc.edu/giving** to make your financial contribution online.

To plan a scholarship, fellowship or endowed gift, please email **p-rabel@tam.u.edu**.



MATT HOFFMAN

FORMER STUDENT GIVES BACK AS FACULTY MEMBER

It can be said that Matt Hoffman, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, and Texas A&M College of Nursing began their nursing careers together. In 2008, as Hoffman was finishing his prerequisites and beginning to fill out his application for nursing school, the college admitted its first 44 students to its Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) program.

An engaged student leader, Hoffman helped shape many of the practices and policies upon which the College of Nursing was established.

"Because the college was so new, questions about new policies and procedures kept coming up, and the faculty and administrators sought input from students before many of the decisions were made," Hoffman said. "Among the most enduring policies I advocated for was to establish a rule about adopting a uniform grading system. In the beginning, some professors rounded grades, while others did not. Regardless of how one feels about rounding grades, the inconsistency wasn't equitable. So, with broad input from students and faculty, the college adopted a standard grading policy that does not permit rounding. This policy remains unchanged and is found in the undergraduate and graduate handbooks."

While pursuing his BSN, he learned something about himself that would define the trajectory of his nursing career.

"We had a tight cohort, and we would often meet in small groups to study," said Hoffman. "We took turns 'teaching' each other the concepts that we individually understood the best. It helped us learn the materials, and I discovered that I enjoyed teaching."

Encouraged by his early teaching experiences and inspired by several faculty, Hoffman became the first BSN graduate of the college to return as a faculty member. He earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice with a family nurse practitioner specialization and is currently a clinical assistant professor, teaching pharmacology and pathophysiology courses.

"My experiences as a student at the College of Nursing help me connect with students on a more personal level," he said. "I can tell our students that I have literally sat in their seats, and I understand the challenges they face."



BROOKE BROWDER, BSN, RN

Brooke Browder '18 remembers the day she decided to become a nurse. An explosion on April 17, 2013, rocked her hometown of West, Texas, killing 15, injuring more than 200 and significantly damaging more than 125 buildings. She began volunteering at a hospital in Waco. Growing up in a tight-knit community, she was looking for something special as she began considering universities.

"Texas A&M stood out because of the core values," Browder said. "I wanted to be a part of this school." Browder was accepted but opportunity knocked with a Presidential Scholarship from McLennan Community College. There she completed her prerequisites, earning an associate degree. She then came to Texas A&M for her bachelor's degree in nursing, going on to earn the Dean's Scholarship. Browder served as Class Council president, Student Nurse Association president, Aggie Pediatric Nurse Association vice president and treasurer, and class representative. She now works at Parkland Hospital in Dallas in the emergency department's critical care residency program.



BRIAN COSMO LIN, MBA, BBA, BSN, RN

After earning a business degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2002, Brian Cosmo Lin '13 led the opening of a Jamba Juice franchise next to Dell Children's Medical Group in Round Rock, Texas, a location that led to him considering a new career: nursing.

Lin learned of the College of Nursing's second degree program available in Round Rock, applied and was admitted. "Whatever I have, I want to share and give back," he said. Lin graduated with a Bachelor of Science in nursing and next received a master's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Tyler. Lin's nursing career began at Ascension Seton as a patient safety assistant, working with pediatric and adult patients identified as at-risk for self-harm. He then joined Dell Children's Medical Group, the same medical center that sparked his interest in nursing, where he quickly advanced from registered nurse (RN) resident to preceptor, charge RN and now, supervisor. Lin oversees the acute rehab unit where nurses educate and empower families to care for children who have experienced a life-changing event.



KRISTEN SCHAPSON, BSN, RN, CCRN

Kristen Schapson '12 received the inaugural Outstanding Former Student Award, which honors a nursing graduate who has advanced in the nursing profession by exhibiting the Aggie Core Values. She is currently a registered nurse in the pediatric intensive care unit at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston and has selflessly given her time to help others. Schapson is on rotation as a code responder with the rapid response team and precepts new nurses.

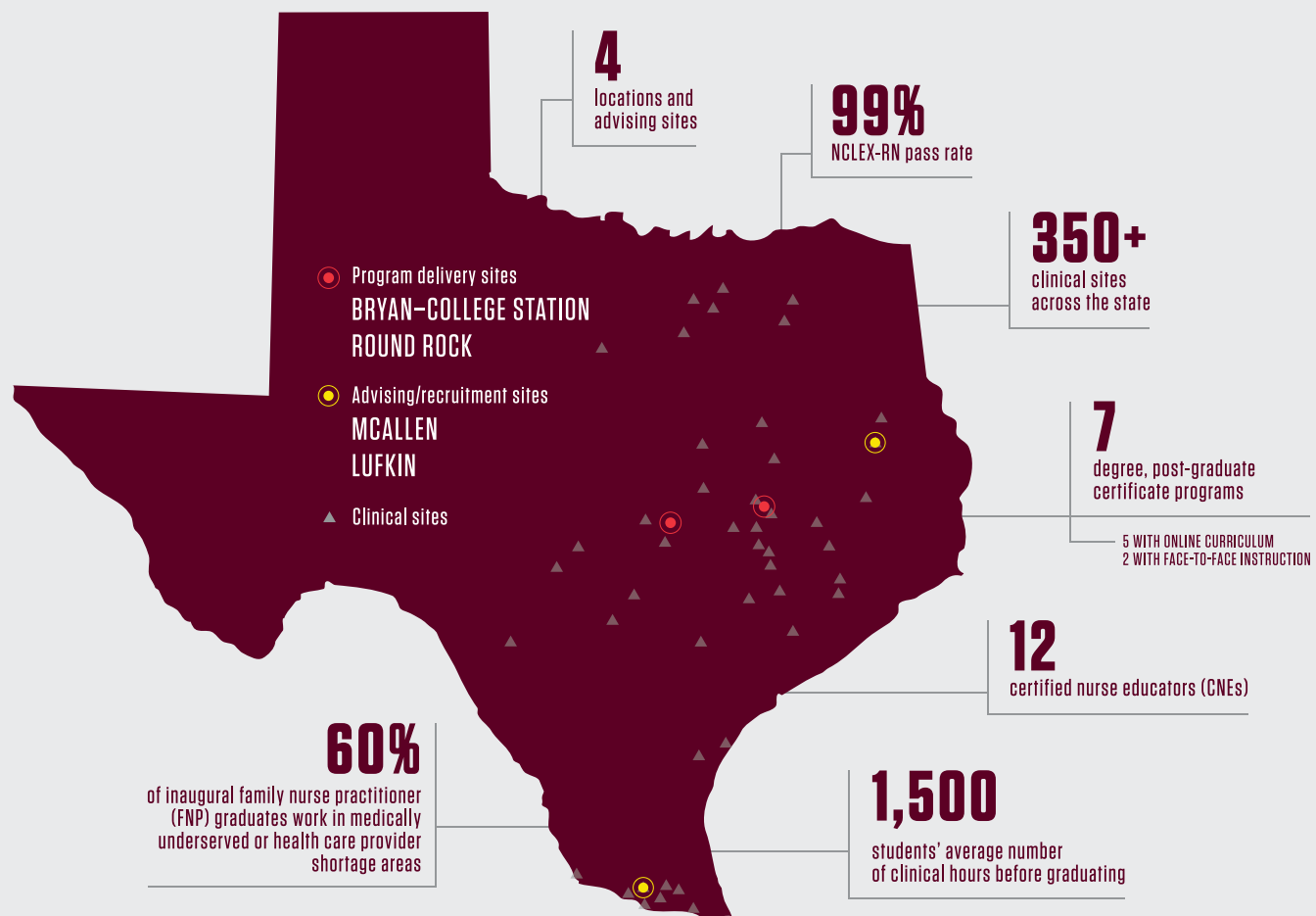
After graduation, Schapson had volunteered with Project Medishare in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, where she spent nine months serving patients in need of quality health care. In 2014, she returned to help run a rural clinic in a remote village. During Hurricane Harvey, in 2017, Schapson stayed at the hospital, caring for patients and families as access to the hospital was blocked by flooding.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

College of Nursing

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Transforming health through service, research and practice, the Texas A&M College of Nursing prepares students to lead in the future of health care. We are dedicated to serving the needs of Texas, and beyond, through partnerships and interdisciplinary outreach initiatives. We are Aggie nurses.