# Longhorn Nursing

**Volume Eleven**     THE FUTURE OF NURSING STARTS HERE     **Fall 2022**

WHAT STARTS HERE

STARTS WITH YOU

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Nursing

# A message from
# Dean Alexa Stuifbergen

The 2021–2022 academic year was busy and productive at The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing. We welcomed new faculty and students and celebrated the graduations of 147 students, including the first cohort to complete our revised post-masters program for Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioners. Many of our faculty have been actively engaged in implementing new competency-based educational strategies across our undergraduate and graduate programs. We celebrated our exciting fundraising success — more than $30 million to date — as we launched the public phase of the campus-wide "What Starts Here" fundraising campaign in March with the dedication of the new Myrtle E. and Earl E. Walker Lobby. Since summer, a group of faculty and staff have been working to develop a School of Nursing Strategic Plan that will align with UT Austin's ambitious new strategic plan, so, together, we can seize new opportunities and identify new directions that support our teaching, research and service missions.

The generous support of our many alumni and friends is what has allowed us to continue to move our programs and initiatives forward. Because of the support of our donors, we were able to keep educating our students, launching innovative research, improving facilities for our students and helping the underserved in our community during the many unexpected challenges of the past two years.

Our primary mission is to educate the next generation of Texas Nurses. Many of our students would not be able to complete their education without the financial support they receive. Investing in undergraduate and graduate education is important because we are not only supporting the next generation of nurse leaders but also the future of health care. In 2022, our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs were among the best in the nation and the top-ranked graduate nursing programs in Texas by U.S. News & World Report.

The outstanding clinicians, teachers and nurse scientists on our faculty make all of this possible, and I hope you will enjoy reading about their accomplishments and leadership in the following pages.

As many of you know by now, the 2022–23 academic year will be my final year as dean at the School of Nursing. It has been my privilege to facilitate the work of our faculty, staff and students, especially through the many and seemingly unending challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is much to be accomplished over the next year, and I look forward to working with each of you to bring the very best to our School of Nursing.

*Alexa Stuifbergen*

**Alexa K. Stuifbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN**

Dean, The University of Texas at Austin
School of Nursing
Laura Lee Blanton Chair in Nursing
James R. Dougherty, Jr., Centennial Professor in Nursing

# In this issue

# WHAT STARTS HERE

## STARTS WITH YOU



For more than 60 years, the School of Nursing at The University of Texas at Austin has been a cornerstone of health care education and service on the Forty Acres. However, the true impact of our work to support the education and development of nursing students comes after they leave our campus. The professional contributions of our nearly 9,000 alumni throughout their careers cannot be overestimated. Today, the growing population of Texas — now over 28 million — and the increasing needs for health care and nurses, both in Texas and around the world, make our School's work even more critical.

Our goal is to become one of the world's most innovative learning and research environments as we prepare our nursing graduates to engage individuals and organizations in initiatives for person-centered care and needed change. The health care system is changing radically, and the education we provide and the discoveries our UT Austin nurse scientists make are preparing the nurses who will take care of us and our children in the future. These nurses will advocate for safety, lead necessary change, assist patients and communities, coordinate delivery of services and determine the future's health outcomes.

The support of our alumni and friends is critical if we are to reach this ambitious goal. UT Austin has launched the bold "What Starts Here" campaign, with the overall goal to raise $6 billion to support the University's future. This is the largest campaign goal of any state-funded higher educational institution in Texas to date. The School of Nursing, working with a voluntary campaign committee, has set a goal to raise $50 million for the School during this 10-year campaign. These dollars will enable us to meet the needs of our students and faculty today and in the future. The chart below shares the current progress toward our goal.
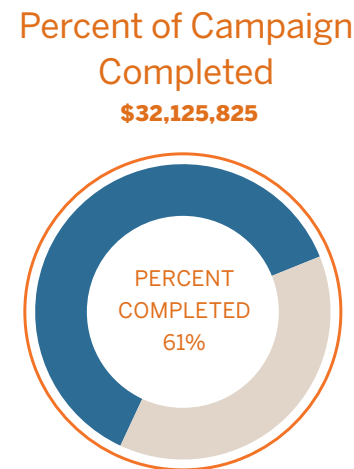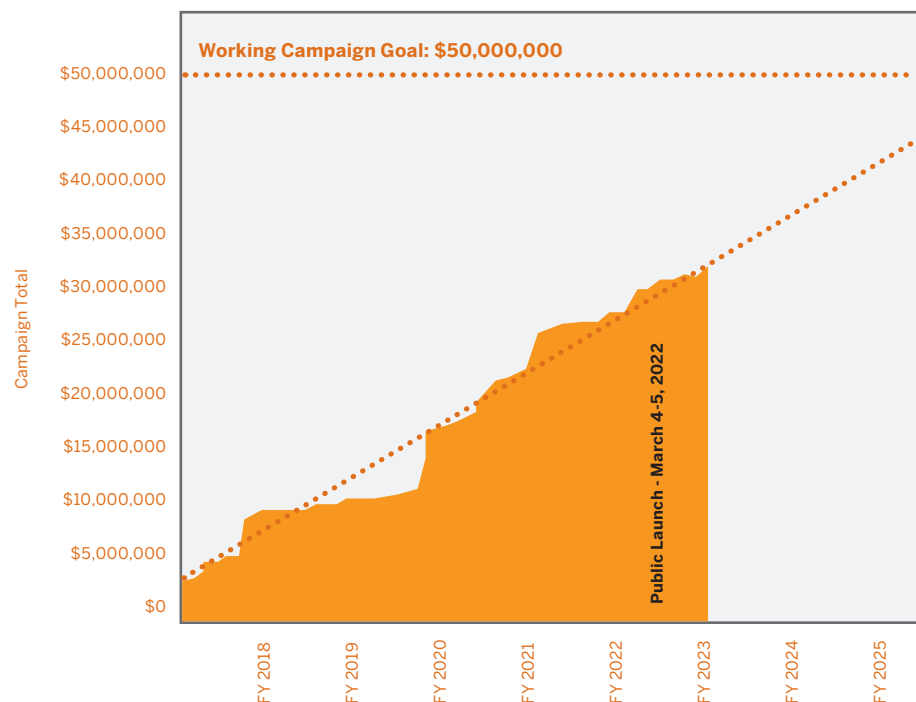
Economic uncertainties, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the high cost of living in Austin have made it more and more difficult for students to afford a high-quality UT Austin education. Support for student scholarships will help ensure that we are able to produce the diverse talented leaders the nation needs to develop higher functioning, more patient-centered health systems. We hope to raise at least $12 million for student support during the campaign, and have secured $8.9 million to date. Our students are already benefiting from new endowed scholarships and graduate fellowships, as well as non-endowed funds to support students' emergency financial needs. In addition to the daily struggles of managing a full course load, some of our students also deal with food insecurity and housing issues due to the high cost of living in Austin.

Nationally, there is a significant shortage of nurse educators and scientists, who are essential for educating the nurses of the future. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing estimates that each year more than 80,407 talented and qualified students cannot be admitted to schools of nursing due to the nationwide shortage of nurse faculty. Philanthropy in the "What Starts Here" campaign will strengthen the School of Nursing by supporting existing, robust recruitment, retention and development of faculty essential to our missions of education, service and research. We recruit and compete nationally for the best faculty to educate and mentor our students and make the discoveries that will guide the future care of persons with a wide variety of health conditions. In this campaign to date, we have raised $4.3 million for faculty support, and we have been able to endow four new professorships, including the School's first distinguished professorship. A generous gift has endowed the third chair for the School, the first new chair in over 20 years. Another donor has pledged funds to support excellence among our professional clinical faculty. Recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty are essential for the continuing excellence of the School.

At the beginning of the campaign, a critical need was to renovate and modernize our sturdy 1970's building to support innovative simulation and skills training, team-based learning and flexible teaching methods. Support from key donors, foundations and the UT Austin Provost's Office has allowed us to transform major public and student spaces in the building. However, we still have much to do — including a significant classroom renovation in 2023 — to provide students, staff and faculty with the best environment for learning and work.

We are continuing our efforts to generate support for our two nurse-managed clinics, the Family Wellness Center and the Children's Wellness Center, that accommodate thousands of visits for underserved persons in central Texas each year, as well as provide outstanding experiential learning for our students. During the pandemic's early days, when most hospitals and providers had to turn many students away from clinical experiences necessary for graduation and certification, these clinics provided what our students needed. They served the community by never closing their doors, "going on the road," and providing innovative outreach services to bolster vaccine provision in multiple nontraditional settings — laundromats, quick shops, food banks, churches and public schools. In the two clinics, the School's mission of education and research truly come together to serve the community.

When we started the "What Starts Here" campaign in 2016, we knew we could not move forward in realizing our dreams of excellence for the School of Nursing without the continuing generous support of our alumni and friends. Gifts at all levels are deeply appreciated and help move the School of Nursing closer to its goals. As this magazine goes to press, Nursing alumni and friends have given $32.1 million to create 37 new endowments for faculty, student and program support, with $12.9 million committed in estate plans to assist the School of Nursing in the future.

The collective generosity of all our alumni and friends allowed us to reach our initial goal — $25 million — in only four years and gave us the courage to set the historic goal for the School of Nursing of $50 million to support efforts to produce the next generation of Texas Nurse leaders. "What Starts Here" and the impact of our Texas Nurses is limited only by our vision. We have fewer than 1,500 days to decide how to support the School of Nursing. We are so grateful to those who have generously given during this campaign and encouraged us to set a higher goal. The support of students, faculty, facilities and programs are all important, and your investment will be sound.

If you have not yet contributed to the "What Starts Here" campaign, we invite you to visit with us (Sergio Delgado, chief development officer: sdelgado@nursing.utexas.edu) and how you can change the world and improve the future of health care by supporting tomorrow's nurse leaders.

**Remember: What starts here starts with you!**

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### Campaign Goal
**$50,000,000**



PROGRESS TO GOAL 64.25%

### Student Support Goal
**$12,000,000**



PROGRESS TO GOAL 74.58%

### Percent of Campaign Completed
**$32,125,825**



PERCENT COMPLETED 61%

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## Cumulative Campaign Progress
### As of 10-7-2022



Working Campaign Goal: $50,000,000

Campaign Total

$50,000,000
$45,000,000
$40,000,000
$35,000,000
$30,000,000
$25,000,000
$20,000,000
$15,000,000
$10,000,000
$5,000,000
$0

FY 2018  FY 2019  FY 2020  FY 2021  FY 2022  FY 2023  FY 2024  FY 2025

Public Launch - March 4-5, 2022

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> Our goal is to become one of the world's most innovative learning and research environments as we prepare our nursing graduates to engage individuals and organizations in initiatives for person-centered care and needed change.

# Nursing Faculty and Students
## Participate in Collaborative Research With the Children's Wellness Center

The School of Nursing has a long history of providing health care to underserved communities in the Austin area. The Children's Wellness Center (CWC) is one way the School fulfills its education, research and service commitment. Through this clinic, the School has provided immunizations and acute and chronic health care services for the children of the Del Valle School District and the broader community for more than 25 years.

In addition to health services, the CWC also supports the research mission of the School of Nursing, through projects conducted by a variety of nursing faculty and students. One current project, led by Erin M. Rodríguez, PhD, associate professor, department of educational psychology in the College of Education, builds on the asthma management work of Sharon Horner, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and associate dean for research at the School of Nursing. Rodríguez and Horner initially collaborated on a pilot study funded by the St. David's Center for Health Promotion Research in Underserved Populations (CHPR) that provided the essential preliminary data needed for an ongoing five-year study. A $3.2 million grant from The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities is supporting this study to test the effects of a bilingual, self-management skills program designed for Latinx families of children ages 8 to 14 with asthma.

The CWC was one of the original recruitment sites for Rodríguez and Horner's pilot study in 2017 and is one of the primary sites for recruitment for the current study.

For the study, Rodríguez is enrolling 280 families of children with asthma. After the families complete the intervention program, she will continue to observe them for another 12 months to evaluate asthma outcomes. She will be using a family-based approach involving both the parent and child, to determine whether the changes will ultimately lead to better asthma outcomes.

In another study, Lorraine Walker, EdD, RN, MPH, Luci B. Johnson Centennial Professor at the School of Nursing, also utilized the CWC to recruit a diverse sample of mothers for her research measuring postpartum specific stressors and refining a coping instrument.

Funded by a grant from the St. David's CHPR, this six-month study focuses on mothers who are in the extended postpartum time with children between the ages of two and 21 months, the stressors they experience and how they are able to cope during this time.

> "We are examining if helping families to develop coping skills — using a culturally relevant approach tailored to Latinx families — will positively impact children's asthma outcomes," Rodríguez explained.

Paige Frock, APRN, a pediatric nurse practitioner at the CWC, recently completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project, which involved recruitment of participants through the clinic. Her study focused on health literacy, acculturation and conversations about sexual health among Hispanic/Latinx mothers of adolescents.

According to Frock, the U.S. is seeing rising levels of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among adolescents, especially among Hispanic teens compared with their white non-Hispanic counterparts, and Texas has a relatively high unplanned pregnancy rate among teens.

"I was interested in what influenced conversations about sexual health between Hispanic/Latinx mothers and adolescents and how this information could support the development of tailored interventions that could eventually lower STIs and teen pregnancy rates among Hispanic/Latinx adolescents."
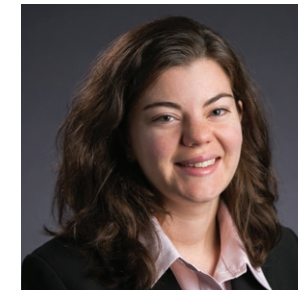
Texas recently became one of five states requiring parents to opt their children into sex education in schools rather than automatically enrolling students in sex education and allowing parents to opt them out.

Frock said this may reinforce the stigma around having open and honest conversations about sexual health, protection against STIs and unplanned pregnancy, consent, and even sexual abuse.

"This, combined with the rising rates of STIs and high rate of unplanned pregnancies among Hispanic/Latinx teens make this a very salient topic," she concluded.

For the last three years, School of Nursing faculty and the Children's Wellness Center have been integral partners with Whole Communities-Whole Health (WCWH), an interdisciplinary team of researchers from across the UT Austin campus. The WCWH team is conducting a five-year cohort study with communities in eastern Travis County to understand more about the physical, environmental and emotional health of families facing systemic injustices.

Also utilizing the clinics, WCWH has been working with ambassador families for a year, and they are now recruiting up to 300 families to participate in the children's longitudinal health study.

This study is a transdisciplinary, community-engagement study of children and will examine health in cohorts of children over a five-year period.

For this research, WCWH uses both traditional self-report measures and novel passive sensing measures — such as that obtained through wearing a Fitbit — to collect data. The School of Nursing is a co-sponsor of the Hornsense app, that facilitates data collection and sharing of information with the participants. Through the Hornsense app, researchers can engage with parents by asking them to share or report concerns, like an environmental hazard they have encountered.

"Without the School of Nursing collaboration WCWH, would not be able to electronically nurture relationships with the research participants," said Darla Castelli, PhD, Catherine Mae Parker Centennial Professorship in Education and WCWH co-chair.


Dr. Sharon Horner


Dr. Erin M. Rodríguez


Dr. Lorraine Walker


Dr. Paige Frock


Dr. Darla Castelli

Dr. Kavita Radhakrishnan


Dr. Melessa Kelley


Dr. Cynthia Greywolf

"Currently at UT Austin School of Nursing, we have four nurses who are Native American with PhD degrees, and that's pretty rare to find in any institution."

— John Lowe

# Talking Circles Program Expands to Help Young Adults

Continuing his innovative research, modeled after the ancient Native American tradition of talking circles, John Lowe, PhD, RN, FAAN, Joseph Blades Centennial Memorial Professor in Nursing, is currently engaged in two projects related to his "Talking Circles" program.

Lowe's program is the first manualized talking circle intervention with a written format and curriculum based on three Native-Reliance components: being responsible, being confident and being disciplined.

In his original study, Lowe included Native American youth ages 10–18, but in 2019, he implemented a Talking Circles project in Oklahoma for Native American young adults ages 18–24.

Seventy-five Native American college students participated in the program and were evaluated. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the project came to an unexpected halt. Now, Lowe is going back and retesting the same group of participants using the same measures around substance use, coping and cultural identity. He will be conducting qualitative interviews to see how participants managed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and how the program worked for them during that time.

Utilizing the original curriculum, Lowe will be implementing the Talking Circles program in an entire school system in North Carolina, through a $600,000 project funded by the Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation. Partnering with the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina, this project will determine how effective the Talking Circles program is when delivered in a school setting.

Lowe said his goal with this study is to have every child in the school system receive the intervention.

As a nurse scientist, Lowe has several other ongoing research projects, including a community-based study titled "Native American Health Survey Among Marginalized Tribal Communities" funded by a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Research for Health Equity (CRHE) grant.

Working with Dennis Coker, principal chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, the goal of the study is to collect health status data among marginalized Native American communities within the Delmarva region, which embraces the state of Delaware and the Eastern Shore counties of Maryland and Virginia, to inform health system approaches for addressing the physical, social and mental health needs of these communities. Tribal members of the Delmarva region are presently unable to receive federal services and support for health care. Using a tribal specific Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, the study seeks to establish general baseline health descriptors, COVID-19 status and racial discrimination factors for each tribal community. The local data collected will be compared with national data for tribes and the general population.

Lowe is also collaborating with Melessa Kelley, PhD, MSN, RN, assistant professor at the School of Nursing, on a nationwide study of long-term immunity to COVID-19 in a partnership with the Indiana University at Bloomington School of Public Health. Lowe and Kelley are directing an expansion of the original study with a Native American community in Oklahoma. They will follow individuals for 14 months and hope to learn about immunity among those who have and have not had the virus, as well as those who have and have not been vaccinated.

In addition, Lowe is working on a new collaborative research project with Kavita Radhakrishnan, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, associate professor at the School of Nursing.

This study, funded by a $3.8 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant, will determine whether Radhakrishnan's sensor-controlled digital games to manage heart failure are culturally adaptable. They will be working with the Lumbee Native American Tribe in North Carolina and will use a community-based participatory research method by talking with members of the community and identifying their preferences as they work to adapt the intervention.

In addition to teaching and conducting research, Lowe serves as a mentor for current and postdoctoral students, including Cynthia Greywolf, PhD, DNP, PMHNP, who is a Provost's Early Career Cohort Fellow at the School of Nursing. Greywolf and Lowe are collaborating on a project funded by a P60 NIH grant, a subaward with Washington State University, titled "The Development and Evaluation of Harm Reduction Talking Circles for Alcohol Use Disorders among American Indians and Alaska Natives."

With the goal of bringing a focus to the disparity and health equity needs of this population and providing future collaboration with others in nursing, Lowe is leading an effort with Indigenous nurse scientists from Canada, New Zealand and Australia to bring the 3rd International Indigenous Nursing Research Summit to the UT Austin School of Nursing.

"Currently at the UT Austin School of Nursing, we have four nurses who are Native American with PhD degrees, and that's pretty rare to find in any institution," Lowe said. "I think that since we are leading a lot of the research efforts, it's really great that we can bring that focus here, and it will help build and expand our efforts. This is a way for us to network, and it's a way for us to initiate potential future possibilities."

The International Summit to share research findings and address health and well-being among Indigenous populations worldwide was held on Nov. 3–4, 2022, at the UT Austin AT&T Conference Center. The conference provided opportunities to learn about Indigenous populations in more depth and to network with nurse researchers who are actively working to improve the health and lives of Indigenous people. Shannon Zenk, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN, the Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, was the featured speaker at the Summit.

# It's All in Your Head:
## Cancer Researcher Looks at Long-term Effects on the Brain



Dr. Shelli Kesler

Over the course of the pandemic, researchers have made a somewhat serendipitous discovery of a connection between the cognitive impairment caused by cancer chemotherapy, commonly referred to as "chemo brain," and COVID-19 brain fog.

Cognitive decline following cancer and its treatments is a common problem that reduces quality of life and survival, according to Shelli Kesler, PhD, associate professor at the School of Nursing with a joint appointment in diagnostic medicine and oncology at Dell Medical School. Approximately 60 percent of cancer patients report experiencing cognitive decline following chemotherapy, but it remains unknown as to which patients are at risk.

"Cancer is a large public health problem," Kesler said. "Most people survive the disease itself, but long-term effects of the disease and its treatments on brain health can be debilitating and reduce quality of life. Decreased brain health, such as cognitive impairment or chronic depression, can even reduce survival."

As a cognitive neuroscientist, Kesler's areas of expertise are neuroimaging, neuropsychology, biostatistics, machine learning and computer programming. Her research program focuses on the neural mechanisms of chronic conditions, especially cancer-related cognitive neurotoxicities, or the tendency of some treatments to cause damage to the nervous system.

Her work includes both clinical and preclinical studies that focus on translational approaches for measuring the functional and structural connectome, the system of neural pathways in a brain or nervous system, in both humans and animals using MR neuroimaging. The overarching goals of her work concern the neurobiologic subtyping of cognitive impairments, as well as neuroimaging-based prediction of cognitive-behavioral outcomes, survival and treatment response across the lifespan. Kesler was recruited to the School of Nursing from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

"My work has always involved the effects of brain injury on cognitive-behavioral function," she added. "Very early in my career, I studied mild traumatic brain injury and carbon monoxide poisoning. I later became interested in cancer-related brain injury, and, most recently, COVID-19-related brain changes."

Kesler currently has projects including patients with breast cancer, diffuse glioma and COVID-19. One of her projects with breast cancer survivors is concerned with predicting long-term cognitive status to determine which patients are at highest risk for cognitive decline.

Kesler and her team previously built a machine-learning model that could predict future cognitive impairment from pre-treatment brain magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) with 100 percent accuracy. She currently has an R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) at the National Institutes of Health to further validate and refine this model in a larger, multi-site sample.
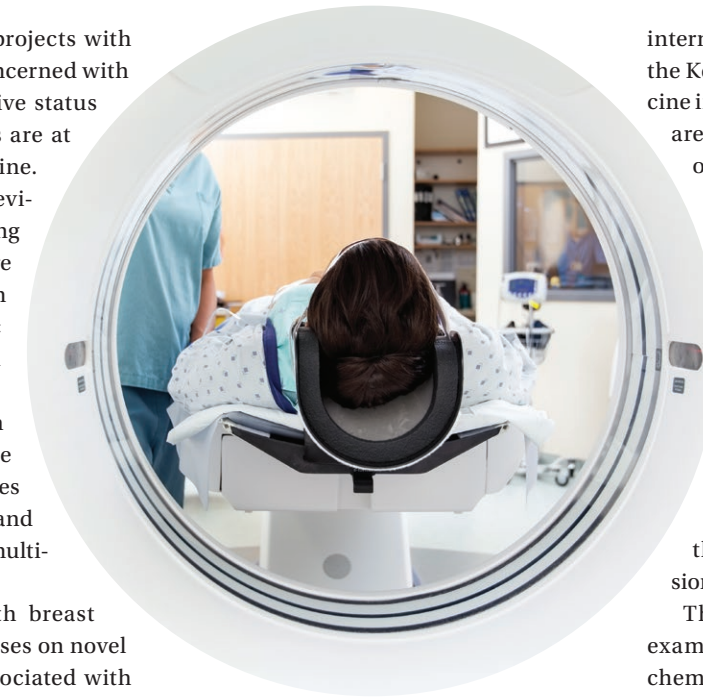
In a second project with breast cancer survivors, Kesler focuses on novel measures of brain aging associated with chemotherapy.

"We measure brain-aging resilience with computer simulations to determine the brain network's vulnerability to the type of damage that occurs with normal aging," she explained. "We also use machine-learning algorithms to estimate cortical brain age and compare this with chronological age. We can calculate the probability of the brain's organization being classified as Alzheimer's disease, also using machine learning algorithms."

In this project, also funded by an R01 grant from the NCI, Kesler's team is longitudinally measuring brain-aging metrics in chemotherapy-treated patients with breast cancer, chemotherapy naïve patients and non-cancer controls. This study will provide a unique set of data following these individuals from pre-treatment up to 10 years post-treatment.

Kesler is also conducting a study of persons with gliomas, funded by an R03 grant from the NCI. Gliomas are primary brain tumors than may be aggressive and difficult to treat. Kesler's study involves predicting overall survival from MRI scans that are completed on patients prior to surgery to remove the glioma.

According to Kesler, previous studies have used a method known as radiomics, which extracts information about the brain tumor from brain MRI and uses this information to predict important outcomes such as survival rate. However, gliomas are diffuse tumors that typically spread throughout the brain.

"My previous work demonstrated that these tumors cause widespread disruption to the brain network," she said. "Therefore, I thought that focusing on the tumor alone, ignoring the rest of the brain, would miss potentially important information."

She built a machine-learning model using the entire brain network and found it significantly outperformed radiomic models in predicting survival rate. Her current study will allow her to further validate and refine the prediction models in a larger sample and to study the effects of various tumor genotypes on the brain network.

In another glioma study, funded by an internal grant that is a collaboration with the Keeling Center for Comparative Medicine in Bastrop, Texas, Kesler and her team are developing a rhesus macaque model of chemotherapy-induced cognitive impairment in order to better understand which chemotherapies are most likely to cause impairment.

"This information is critical for my prediction modeling work," Kesler said. "If we know a patient is at high risk for cognitive impairment and we also know which chemotherapies are most likely to cause impairment, patients and their clinicians can use this information for treatment decision making."

The study will also allow them to examine the molecular mechanisms of chemotherapy-related cognitive impairment so that treatments can be developed. According to Kesler, there are currently no standardized treatments for chemotherapy-related cognitive impairment.

In addition, she is using brain MRI to examine alterations in brain structure and function associated with COVID-19 and how these alterations affect cognitive function.

Through her multiple research studies, Kesler said her overall goal is to develop an online precision health tool that uses neuroimaging to predict brain health outcomes, such as cognition and brain tumor survival. These predictions can inform shared treatment decision-making between persons experiencing these conditions and their health care providers.

"I've already developed and published the software that processes the neuroimaging data, and we're working on validating the prediction models," she added. "Brain MRI is standard of care for brain tumor patients but not for non-central nervous system cancers — such as breast cancer or COVID-19. I'm also working on alternative neuroimaging strategies, such as functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS), which is an affordable, portable technology for measuring brain function."

"Cancer-related and COVID-19-related cognitive difficulties are real," Kesler said. "These difficulties have measurable, brain-based origins. I want people to know that there are potential interventions for those who are struggling with cognitive effects."

> "If we know a patient is at high risk for cognitive impairment and we also know which chemotherapies are most likely to cause impairment, patients and their clinicians can use this information for treatment decision making."

## School of Nursing year in photos

Following a gradual return to normalcy after the pandemic, this past academic year became a time of celebrating many School of Nursing events, such as Light the Lamp ceremonies, conferences and convocations. We look forward to hosting more in-person events and engaging with each other frequently throughout the next year.



MSN graduates Belinda Read and Camille Kielbasa with marshal Sheri Innerarity

DNP graduates Fathia Alomoush, Carly Edgar and Paige Frock

May 2022 BSN graduates

Light the Lamp Pinning Ceremony

APRN FNP Certificate graduates Chelsey Jones-Gallegos, Elizabeth Washington, Candice Shipp and Laura Defreitas

Alex García with PhD graduates Eunju Choi and Adem Cengiz

Wellness Center staff appreciation lunch

Poster session at St. David's CHPR Conference

Graduate students go to the Texas State Capitol

Students de-stress in the company of therapy dogs from Divine Canines before final exams.

Dr. Tanya Coakley

# School of Nursing Welcomes Inaugural Associate Dean of Diversity

"It's a natural fit to come here to the UT Austin School of Nursing and work with this great group of nurses and nurse educators."

With a PhD in social work, Tanya Coakley, professor and the School's inaugural associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), has always enjoyed working with faculty colleagues at schools of nursing at a variety of institutions. In August 2021, Coakley joined the faculty at the UT Austin School of Nursing.

"UT Austin is well-known for its research, so it was an easy decision for me to accept the School of Nursing's offer," she said. "I knew it would be a great place to continue my current research, implement future studies and collaborate with one of the finest group of nurses and nurse educators in the nation."

Coakley's area of expertise is working with African American (AA) families, particularly fathers and sons, and assisting with sexual health communication. She has established a reputation as one of the few scholars to address the scarcity of research focusing on AA fathers' roles in protecting their children, particularly sons, from sexual health risks.

Coakley previously received National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding through the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to conduct a randomized controlled trial with AA fathers and sons. The study involved delivery of an intervention to enhance the self-efficacy and self-confidence of fathers in talking about sex and sexual health risks with their sons.

Her program of scholarship also involves interdisciplinary community-based approaches to improve children's health and development through parent education. Clear communication between AA parents and youth about sexual health is associated with higher rates of sexual abstinence, condom use, and intent to delay initiation of sexual intercourse, which can prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy. While researchers agree that pre-adolescence is the best time for parents to communicate with their children, parents often lack adequate information and are uncomfortable talking to their youth about sexual health.

Coakley is currently developing a grant that involves parent-child health communication with a component of hope. Her goal is to instill the hope in children that they have some aspect of control over their future. Collaborating with colleagues from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing, Coakley is also developing a tool for parent-child communication around health.

In addition to teaching and conducting research, Coakley served as the associate dean for DEI for the School of Nursing during the 2021-2022 academic year. She worked with a team of faculty, staff and students on the School's DE&I Committee to promote efforts to ensure that the School of Nursing is an accepting place for people of diverse views.

"I would like for the School of Nursing to be a place where people feel safe as well as encouraged and supported. I want to see individuals thrive in their education, career choices and goals," she concluded.

# A Legacy Continues:
## Endowed Scholarships in Nursing Support Future Generations of Longhorns



The Petterson family continues to support future Longhorns through the Lyle and Jeryle Petterson Endowed Scholarship for The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing.

Jeff Petterson

As a first-generation graduate of UT Austin in 1971, Jeff Petterson realized that other than his family, UT Austin has had the greatest impact on his life and career success. For this reason, Petterson and his siblings, who are also loyal friends of the university, decided to establish a legacy gift. Together, they created an endowed scholarship to honor their parents Lyle and Jeryle Petterson.

The family continues to support future Longhorns through the Lyle and Jeryle Petterson Endowed Scholarship for UT Austin School of Nursing. This scholarship provides support to high-potential Texas students from low- and middle-income families who are enrolled in the School of Nursing.

As one of the leading nursing schools in the nation, Petterson said he was inspired by the work the School was doing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"That work was changing the world in Austin and in Travis County," he added. "The work at the clinics also changes the world for those communities."

Petterson's passion for the School of Nursing hits close to home as he shared that his niece had left another career field in her mid-30s to receive a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

"She loves her career and is now a department supervisor," he said. "She has excelled, and one year was named the hospital 'Provider of the Year'."

Petterson said participating in the Texas Challenge scholarship program was a no-brainer for him, as it not only doubles the amount of the scholarship but the number of students able to receive assistance.

"I continue to be inspired by the work being done by the School of Nursing and have continued to add funds — matched by the Texas Challenge — to the scholarship," he added. "I enjoy helping students pursue their degree and in hearing from them about their progress."

# Efforts to Reach Underserved Communities During Pandemic Garner Praise and Awards

The School of Nursing and the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement have partnered with the City of Austin, Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Rehoboth Baptist Church to develop the African American Mental Health and Wellness (AMEN) Program. This initiative supports the mental and physical health of African American residents and includes on-site clinical services, mental health education programs and mental health training for pastors. The effort is funded by a grant of over $500,000 from Austin Public Health.

"The mission was to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental health," said Jacki Hecht, MSN, RN, managing director of the AMEN program.

When the program was launched in 2019, the team never envisioned how vital it would become, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. While the program was designed to support the mental health and wellness of African American residents in the Austin area, the program quickly became a lifeline to many in the largely east Austin community.

In recognition of their effort to continue to serve their community throughout COVID-19, the AMEN program received a "Together We Will Heal" Hero Award at the annual Central Texas African American Family Support Conference in February 2022. This was a new award created in direct response to the pandemic and its impact on the African American community, particularly on people living with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, as well as intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Along with providing on-site clinical services, mental health education programs and mental health training for pastors, the AMEN team joined forces with the School of Nursing to assist with the School's Vaccination Administration Mobile Operations (VAMOS), the drive-through COVID-19 vaccination clinics

Jacki Hecht, Dr. Ana Todd, Angela Robertson-Bigham, Hannah Tindall and Isha Patell

set up at area churches and other local community sites.

In addition to the team award, Angela Robertson-Bigham, who is a certified community health worker and wellness coordinator for church community outreach efforts and serves as the VAMOS communications coordinator at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, also received a Hero Award at the conference. She was recognized for coordinating the mobile vaccination clinics and managing a community garden where the community can learn about the important intersection of mind-body-spirit in overall well-being. During the pandemic, she oversaw one of the first church-based mobile vaccine clinics at her church, Rehoboth Baptist Church, and continues to assist with other mobile vaccine clinics and homebound visits.

Hecht shared how, at the beginning of the pandemic, members of the AMEN team worked with pastors and lay health workers within the churches to conduct a community assessment to determine the needs of congregants.

"We offered a six-week faith-based, holistic mental health and wellness program using Zoom to encourage participants to engage in the five behaviors known to improve mental wellness, including mindfulness, healthy eating, physical activity, sleep and social connectedness," she added. "In addition, we held a monthly mental health dialogue focused on topics, such as grief, loss, and loneliness; self-care; the impact of racism on health; COVID-19 vaccine safety; heart disease prevention; advanced care planning; and mindfulness."

Moving forward, Hecht said their plan is to offer training, education and outreach to help the community learn new ways of supporting their own and each other's mental health. This will include a variety of health promoting events, including COVID-19 vaccinations at the St. John's Community Garden and other churches and community settings. Members of the team will also partner with the Black Men's Health Clinic, where they will provide blood pressure screening, education and self-management promotion to support heart health.

# 2022 Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame Welcomes Sharon Horner and John Lowe

Sharon Horner, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dolores V. Sands Chair in Nursing, and John Lowe, PhD, RN, FAAN, Joseph Blades Centennial Memorial Professor in Nursing, were inducted into the 2022 Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame.

Horner and Lowe bring the total to seven School of Nursing faculty members to receive this honor.

The STTI Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame was established in 2010 to recognize nurse researchers who have sustained and impactful research on a national or international scale to improve the lives of people.

"Being inducted into the International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame represents a high point in my career, as this award recognizes the importance and impact of my work to improve the health of children with asthma," Horner said. "It means I am joining a small group of dedicated, and highly motivated individuals who are making a difference in peoples' lives."

In terms of her research working with collaborators and students, Horner said she has developed, refined and tested the asthma self-management intervention over the last 22 years.

The families she has worked with over the years are mostly middle-and-lower-income, and a majority are racial and ethnic minorities, which are groups who are often overlooked in research.

"This intervention has resulted in reduced frequency of asthma symptoms, absenteeism and hospitalizations; improved asthma management skills and decision-making; and led to reductions in asthma severity, and improved quality of life for children and their families," she added. "And the poorest families have made the greatest gains in terms of improvement in health. I've found that these improvements in self-management are sustained by the families even two years later. Perhaps equally important is that the children enjoy the intervention activities, and their parents are highly pleased by the changes they see in their child's behaviors and asthma symptoms. This work has made a difference in their lives."

As one of only 25 Native American nurses with a PhD in the nation, Lowe is a nurse researcher who has worked for decades to lead the development of nursing research among Native Americans through his own active program of research, through collaborations

Dr. John Lowe and Dr. Sharon Horner

with other established scientists and through his dedicated mentoring of students and post-doctoral fellows.

Lowe is, perhaps, best known for developing the first manualized Talking Circle intervention. This program has been implemented and evaluated among Native American youth ages 10–18 in several studies supported by the National Institutes of Health grants and the Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation Catalyst Award. Findings have demonstrated significant reduction in stress and alcohol and substance use risk behaviors in those who received the Talking Circle program compared to those who received the standard programs — Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) and Be A Winner (BAW).

"It is an honor to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, as it acknowledges nurse researchers who have achieved significant and sustained national or international recognition for their work, and, perhaps more importantly, that work has impacted the lives of the people it serves," Lowe concluded.

# Rhee Continues Research on Adolescent Asthma

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**H**yekyun Rhee, PhD, RN, FAAN, and La Quinta Centennial Professor in Nursing, joined the School of Nursing faculty in August 2021, after a distinguished career at the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York. In addition to teaching, she is continuing 20 years of innovative research on adolescent asthma.

"Adolescence is a time to develop self-management skills, and youngsters like to be independent of their parents, but they don't have the skills to be truly independent," she said. Realizing that there was a gap in literature for adolescents with chronic conditions, Rhee wanted to give them the exclusive attention they needed and to develop interventions to help them become better self-managers of their asthma.

Rhee began her research with focus group studies looking at teens with asthma and their risk behaviors. In this study, the teens informed her that they didn't want to learn how to manage their asthma through their parents or health care providers; they preferred to learn from their peers. From here, Rhee began exploring how to deliver a peer intervention.

With the goal of using peer connectivity and "peer pressure" in a positive way, Rhee received a grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to begin testing a peer-led asthma self-management intervention and comparing it to the more typical adult-led intervention.

Conducting the study in Rochester with more than 100 adolescents, Rhee found that participants in the peer-led intervention had better outcomes than those in the adult-led intervention.

Just before moving to Austin in 2021, Rhee completed a six-year multi-site project to assess if the peer-led intervention study was manageable and well received outside of Rochester. She conducted research with over 370 diverse adolescents in Baltimore, Maryland; Buffalo, New York; and Memphis, Tennessee. As part of her research, Rhee realized that adolescents needed more usable and effective instruments to monitor and interpret their asthma symptoms.

"Kids don't recognize and realize they have the symptoms — coughing and wheezing," Rhee said. "It means they've had asthma for such a long time and have got used to the symptoms, and they don't feel like it's bad, even though it is."

Through this observation, Rhee realized that the adolescents often don't feel the urgency of taking their medication. Wanting to tackle the poor symptom perception issue, Rhee received a $1,682,300 grant from the NIH to develop a new instrument to help adolescents assess their own asthma symptoms.

Rhee collaborated with Dr. Mark Bocko, professor of electrical computer engineering at the University of Rochester, to develop and patent the Automated Device for Asthma Monitoring (ADAM), a wearable device paired with an app and algorithm that picks up the sounds, like coughing and wheezing, automatically. ADAM provides an objective way to measure asthma symptoms that can also be reported back to the health care providers.

Having always been interested in technology, Rhee sees a future in creating cutting-edge interventions for teens struggling with asthma self-management. She saw Texas as a hub for technology and knew a lot of "bright, shiny things" were coming out of Austin.

During COVID-19, Rhee had a "moment" where she thought about her life and what she wanted before entering retirement. After having an epiphany and thinking about her future, she realized she wanted a different experience and one "final push" in her career.

After being in Rochester for nearly 15 years, Rhee never thought about moving or leaving her comfortable life and career at the University of Rochester.

"I wanted to see what else I could do besides what I did in Rochester," she added.

Now continuing her research at the School of Nursing, Rhee decided she wanted to start collecting the clinical trial data from the ADAM device. Her goal is to discover whether the instrument is actually changing the patient's behaviors and affecting outcomes.



Hyekyun Rhee, PhD, RN, FAAN, La Quinta Centennial Professor in Nursing

# It Takes a Village: Collaborative Efforts Help Move Digital Games Research Forward

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**G**aming devices aren't just for kids anymore, as these gadgets can mean the difference between life and death for older adults who have been diagnosed with heart failure (HF).

Since 2018, Kavita Radhakrishnan, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, associate professor, has been finding successful ways to encourage and monitor patients with HF through the sensor-controlled digital games (SCDGs). In the spring of 2022, she launched two new R01 projects funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), totaling $6.5 million.

The SCDGs that will be tested in these studies were developed by Radhakrishnan and her team over a series of preliminary studies to integrate data from behavior-tracking sensors to trigger progress, rewards and positive feedback in a digital game to motivate real-time behaviors that enhance management of HF.

Her research began with a pilot grant awarded by the School of Nursing's Center for Transdisciplinary Collaborative Research in Self-Management Science (TCRSS), a P30 Center of Excellence funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) at NIH. This first pilot study was a collaborative effort with the UT Austin Simulation and Gaming Application Lab, to test the feasibility of creating a device.

Over time, Radhakrishnan's team of: Christine Julien, professor at the UT Austin Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Edison Thomaz, assistant professor at the UT Austin Department of Computer Science; and Matthew O'Hair with Good Life Games, a game development company in Austin, were able to refine the device.

Her team also includes Tom Baranowski, PhD, professor and health game expert at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and Miyong Kim, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and director of TCRSS at the School of Nursing, who helped with the conceptualization of the study.

Radhakrishnan received a grant in 2018 from the (NINR), to conduct a feasibility randomized control trial with HF patients in their home to see if the newly created devices would work and transfer the data.

Now continuing this research, one of her newly funded projects will include 200 people with heart failure in the Southern U.S. across seven states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas.

"We want to see how playing digital health interventions improves health outcomes and quality of life, and most importantly, self-care behaviors," Radhakrishnan said.

In collaboration with John Lowe, Joseph Blades Centennial Memorial Professor at the School of Nursing, the second newly funded project will help determine whether the SCDGs are culturally adaptable.

For this study, they have combined strengths — Radhakrishnan with her experience with technology interventions for self-care and Lowe with his experience working with Native Americans.

Their work with the Lumbee Native American Tribe in North Carolina will use a community-based participatory research method that consists of talking to the community and identifying their preferences as they work to adapt the game.

Radhakrishnan emphasized that, throughout this project, all her work has relied on a team of experts.

"It's teamwork," she said. "This could not be possible without a team."

Radhakrishnan extends her appreciation to everyone who has been a part of this project, including research colleagues Christine Julien and Matthew O'Hair. In addition, she notes the critical support provided by School of Nursing staff members Jane Denson, senior administrative associate; Rachel Whitefield, administrative associate; Charla Carrington, human resources coordinator; and Cindy Taylor, senior grants and contracts specialist.

"The collaboration of several people across so many disparate disciplines is responsible for developing a unique intervention that is showing signs of genuinely extending life expectancies in a creative — and fun — way," Radhakrishnan concluded.



Kavita Radhakrishnan, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, associate professor

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**School of Nursing**

## Around the School

### Faculty

**Amanda McKinney Alvarado** DNP, CPNP-AC, RN-C, joined the School of Nursing faculty in June as director of the Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program (ACPNP).

**Rick Brown**, PhD, FSBM, SRNT, research professor, received a $1,631,524 grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) for his research project "Brief Computer MI to Motivate Sustained Tobacco Cessation Following Psychiatric Hospital Discharge."

**Jennifer Flippo**, DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, PMHS, clinical assistant professor, was chosen to be on the national Health Policy committee for the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP). During her three-year term, she will help shape federal policy and guide state initiatives to support child health.

**Alexandra García**, PhD '02, RN, FAAN, professor, has been appointed as the assistant dean of graduate programs at the School of Nursing.

Clinical assistant professors **Verónica García Walker**, PhD '14, MSN '84, BSN '82, RN, CNE, and **Leigh Goldstein**, PhD '13, RN, ANP-BC, have been promoted to clinical associate professors in the School of Nursing effective Sept. 1, 2022. Dr. Walker teaches in the undergraduate psychiatric mental health courses and serves as a Level Coordinator. Dr. Goldstein serves as the director of the Learning Enhancement and Academic Progress (LEAP) Center.

**Anna Hans**, MSN '73, a long-term and valued faculty member at the School of Nursing passed away on January 24, 2022.

**Megan Thomas Hebdon**, PhD, DNP, RN, FNP-C, assistant professor, received a research grant from Sigma Theta Tau and the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Foundation. Her co-investigators are **Carolyn Phillips**, PhD '19, MSN, RN, AOCNP, assistant professor, and **Jung Kwak**, PhD, MSW, FGSA, associate professor.

**April Herrera**, DNP '22, MSN '12, RN, CNE, clinical instructor, and **Carly Edgar**, DNP '22, MSN, BSN '02, RN, CPNP-PC, clinical instructor, received a DNP degree from UT Austin in May 2022.

**Sharon Horner**, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and **John Lowe**, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor, were inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Research Hall of Fame. Horner and Lowe were among 32 individuals — representing Australia, Canada, Italy, Nigeria, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the U.S. — who were recognized at the Sigma International Research Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Jung Kwak**, PhD, MSW, FGSA, associate professor, was awarded a Sojourns® Scholar Leadership Program award by the Cambia Health Foundation. She was one of ten emerging palliative care leaders selected from among a competitive pool of applicants. The two-year grant of $180,000 will allow Dr. Kwak to conduct an innovative research project in the field of palliative care.

**John Lowe** PhD, RN, FAAN, professor, received a $600,000 grant from the Rita & Alex Hillman Foundation to support Native American youth mental health well-being.

**Stephanie Morgan**, PhD '13, RN, FNP-BC, clinical professor and director of Practice Innovation, was selected as one of the Texas Nurses Association 25 Outstanding Nurses for 2022. Morgan also received the 2022 Community Impact Award from the Texas Nurse Practitioners.

**Lisa Morris**, DNP '22, clinical assistant professor, has been awarded a VA Interprofessional Advance Fellowship in Clinical Simulation, working at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, at the intersection of simulation and quality to improve health care for veterans and families.

**Laura Murphy**, PhD, MSN '09, BSN '05, RNC-OB, clinical instructor, received a PhD from Texas Women's University in 2022.

**Kavita Radhakrishnan**, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, associate professor was awarded two R01 grants, totaling over $6,000,000, from the National Institute of Health-National Heart Lung and Blood Institute for her five-year study titled "Sensor-controlled digital game for heart failure self-management behavior adherence: A randomized controlled trial."

**Betty Skaggs**, PhD, RN, received the Texas Nurses Association's 2022 Leaders & Legends of Texas Nursing award. This biennial award recognizes nurses whose volunteer service to the association significantly contributed to TNA and health transformation locally, state-wide and nationally.

**Linda Yoder**, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN, Professor, received the Janice Carelock Excellence in Teaching Award.

**Cara Young**, PhD, RN, FNP-C, FAANP, associate professor, was inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, joining the more than 100 alumni and faculty fellows from UT Austin.

### Alumni

**Catherine (Katy) D. Allen**, PhD '22, MPH, RN-BC, is completing a post-doctoral fellowship at UT Austin with the College of Pharmacy.

**Alyce Ashcraft**, PhD '01, ANEF, RN, CNE is a new Fellow in the Gerontological Society of America. She is also serving as the president of the National Hartford Center for Gerontological Nursing Excellence (NHCGNE) for 2021-2022. Ashcraft is the associate dean for research at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing.

**Terry Badger**, PhD '86, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FAPOS, FAAN, professor, was one of four recipients of a $4 million American Cancer Society grant to develop a "Cancer Health Equity Research Center." The award's goal is to improve health equity for Hispanic cancer survivors and family caregivers.

# Around the School

Julie Barroso, PhD '93, received the Julia Eleanor Blair Chenault Chair in Nursing at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Katherine (Kat) Carroll Britt, PhD '22, MSN-IQS, RN, is completing a T32 post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania in the School of Nursing, NewCourtland Center for Transitions and Health.

Stephen J. Cavanagh, PhD '87, MPA, RN, FACHE, FAAN, Dean at University of California, Davis, was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Brittany Christiansen, DNP '17, MSN '11, accepted a position at the University of California at San Francisco as Health Sciences Associate Professor & Acute Care Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Specialty Coordinator.

Emily Croce, PhD '22, CPNP-PC, RN, is completing a post-doctoral fellowship at UT Austin. This T32 fellowship is a joint program in the Steve Hicks School of Social Work and Dell Medical School (Department of Population Health). The fellowship is funded by the NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and focuses on promoting equity in cardiovascular health.

Ken Dion, PhD '11, MSN '95, MBA '95, RN, FAAN, FGSA, serves as the President of Sigma Global Nursing Excellence.

Eliana Gill, PhD '22, RN, is currently completing a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Washington School of Nursing. Dr. Gill also received the Dolores Sands Award for Excellence in Nursing Research while a student at the UT Austin School of Nursing.

J Taylor Harden, PhD '89, RN, FGSA, FAAN, visiting professor, was presented the AMSN Anthony J. Jannetti Award for Extraordinary Contributions to Health Care from the Academy of Medical Surgical Nurses.

Clair B. Jordan, MSN, BSN '68, RN, former Texas Nurses Association executive director, passed away on Sept. 24, 2022.

Tracie Harrison, PhD '04, MSN, BSN '93, RN, FAAN, FGSA, accepted a position as professor, Sun Endowed Chair in Gerontology at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences College of Nursing.

State Representative Donna Howard, MA, BSN '75, received a Texas Nurses Association Legislative Champion Award.

Joanne D. Oliver-Coleman, BSN '62, RN, CNOR-E, was recognized with one of the highest awards the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses gives — The Jerry G. Peers Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Ramona Parker, PhD '07, RN, was selected as the associate vice president and executive dean for Tarleton State University's realigned College of Health Sciences in Stephenville, Texas.

Kate Galloway Parmer, BSN '16, received the UT Austin School of Nursing's 2021 Rising Star Award. This award celebrates a graduate of the School who has received his or her degree within the last 10 years and has shown leadership, impact and innovation in health care delivery and/or health care policy; and who is actively contributing to the profession.

Elizabeth Reifsnider PhD '94, WHNP-BC, PHCNS-BC, FAANP, FAAN, was inducted as president of the Southern Nursing Research Society. Dr. Reifsnider is currently the Nancy Melvin Endowed Professor of Pediatric Nursing, Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University and a 2019 Fulbright Scholar.

Mary Wakefield, PhD '85, MSN '78, RN, FAAN, visiting professor, former administrator of the Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA) and acting deputy director of Health and Human Services, has been appointed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky to lead an effort to "modernize and optimize" the CDC. She began her appointment in mid-August and is presently on a leave of absence from the School of Nursing.

Julie Zuñiga, PhD '13, MSN '06, RN, associate professor, has received the President's Award for Global Learning for 2023, with Janet Ellzey, mechanical engineering professor, for their proposal "Using Local Resources to Treat and Prevent Wounds in Eldoret, Kenya." They will be working with a team of nurses from Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare Consortium, Moi University and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. Zuñiga and Ellzey will also take up to 12 students to Kenya this summer, where they will implement their own project around wound care treatment and prevention.

## Staff

Heather Becker, PhD, research scientist, received the Sigma Theta Tau Epsilon Chapter Friend of Nursing Award.

## Students

Doctoral student Benedicta Anikputa, MPH, RN, was appointed by Governor Greg Abbott to the Chronic Kidney Disease Task Force.

Sigma Theta Tau: Epsilon Chapter Awards:

Doctoral students Allison L. Ferro and Angela Preston received STTI Research Grants. Ferro was also honored with the Billye J. Brown Leadership in Nursing award.

Katelyn Leggio, Shenell Wood and Amanda Wong, BSN '17, received chapter scholarship awards.

## Retirements

Gayle Acton, PhD '93, RN, CS, assistant dean of Graduate Programs retired after 36 years as a School of Nursing faculty member.

Scott Hudson, MSN '00, RN, director of the simulation and skills center at the School of Nursing, received a UT Austin Staff Service Award for 20 years at UT Austin, with nearly 19 of those years at the School of Nursing. Hudson retired from the School of Nursing on Aug. 31, 2022.

Sheri Innerarity, PhD, APRN, FNP, ACNS, FAANP, clinical associate professor, retired after more than 30 years on the faculty at the School.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF NURSING AT A GLANCE 2021-22

Year after year, nurses are recognized by the public as the most trusted profession. It is nurses who assume primary responsibility for delivering safe, evidenced-based care, reporting and responding to patient changes, and making the critical timely decisions that are needed to support patients and their families. Nurses are essential to developing higher-functioning and more patient-centered health systems that can meet the increasing demand for health services from a growing and aging population.
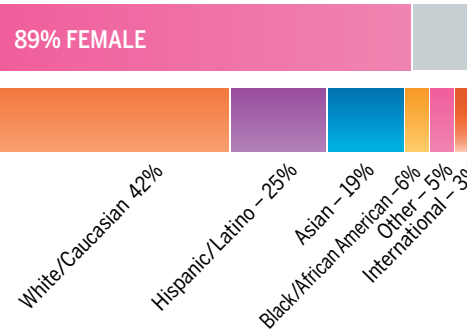
With the support of generous donors, The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing educates and prepares a new generation of exceptional, skilled and compassionate nurses to provide leadership in patient care, innovation and academia. These nurses fuse their understanding of science, technology and the human experience as they advance the profession of nursing and improve patient outcomes.

## QUICK FACTS

**PROGRAM ENROLLMENT**
**739 STUDENTS**

- 6% PhD
- 7% DNP
- 29% MSN
- 58% BSN

**STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

89% FEMALE

- White/Caucasian 42%
- Hispanic/Latino – 25%
- Asian – 19%
- Black/African American – 6%
- Other – 5%
- International – 3%

**> 91%**
**FIRST TIME NCLEX EXAM PASS RATE**

**SCHOLARSHIPS**
**265**
Students received scholarships

$1,778,251 distributed from SON funds/endowments, graduate school funding and grants to school from foundations

**938** Student clinical placements up from 748 in 2019

**101 Faculty**
**76 Staff**

**100 plus** Faculty and Alumni Fellows inducted into the prestigious American Academy of Nursing

**TUITION** Per Year - Texas resident

Undergraduate: $14,142 based on 24 hours
Graduate: $11,495 based on 18 hours

## EDUCATION

**DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (BSN)**
- Extremely competitive freshman admissions
- Ranked #1 BSN program in Texas
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- For those with a bachelor's degree or higher in another field who do not have a nursing degree

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- Leadership in Diverse Health Care Settings
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- Clinically focused doctorate
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- Research-focused doctorate
- Ranked #1 in the nation for "Best Value"
- One of the earliest nursing PhDs in the nation
- Entry post BSN, MSN or Alternate-Entry MSN

## RESEARCH

**Total 2020-21 Funding**

- $26,262,046 in active extramural grant projects
- $21,698,854 in research grants, primarily from the National Institutes of Health
- $4,563,192 in training and special projects grants

## SERVICE

**TWO NURSE-MANAGED CLINICS**
Operated independently by the School of Nursing

Family Wellness Center – Austin
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Approximately 4,069 visits in 2022.
3,038 COVID vaccines were administered. Clinic staff performed curbside visits and incorporated telehealth services.

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