

Longhorn Nursing

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THE YEAR OF



The University of Texas at Austin
School of Nursing

A MESSAGE FROM

Dean Eun-Ok Im



It's hard to believe I've completed one year as dean at The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing, and what a year it's been.

Since my appointment as dean in September 2023, we have experienced continuous change and growth at the UT Austin School of Nursing. We're excited to share information about our efforts across the School of Nursing, as we lead the way to a new era of health-related education at UT Austin.

In this issue of Longhorn Nursing, you'll learn about our new initiatives to support education, research and increased visibility. It's an exciting time to lead the School of Nursing. Our scope has grown over the last year and will continue to grow as we move forward. I am confident that our efforts to improve nursing education in Central Texas will continue to advance the delivery of equitable health care everywhere.

The School of Nursing has been one of the nation's leading nursing schools for over 60 years, providing premier nursing education to generations of nurses, teachers and researchers. One of my goals is to leverage our prominence to increase our national and global rankings.

I'm thrilled to share that our growing success in nursing graduate school programs was recently recognized by U.S. News and World Report, which ranked our MSN program #14 in the nation—an increase of six spots from the previous year. The program is ranked #8 among public universities and is the top-ranked MSN program in Texas. I am confident that our rankings across the board will continue to increase in the years to come.

These are inspiring and important times for the profession of nursing, especially in the area of research. We have extraordinary faculty who collaborate on and lead research initiatives, many of which you'll read about in these pages.

Another priority in the coming years is increasing our

grant funding through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I'm also excited to announce that we are now #20 (FY 2023) among nursing schools for NIH funding—an increase of seven positions.

The generous support of our many alumni and friends is what has allowed us to continue to move our programs and initiatives forward. Now in the ninth year of the 10-year What Starts Here campaign, we have already exceeded our goal of raising \$50 million and look forward to keeping up the momentum. Because of the support of our donors, we can continue to educate our students, launch innovative research, improve our facilities for our students and help the underserved in our communities.

The School of Nursing prepares outstanding students for rewarding careers, with high potential as contributors and leaders to the future of health care and nursing research. The estimated four-year graduation rate for the School's first-time-in-college 2020 cohort is at the top among UT Austin colleges, schools and units (CSUs) at 94 percent. Our retention rate after one year is also at the top among CSUs at 100 percent. It is evident that our faculty do an outstanding job teaching our students and our students are dedicated to nursing.

There's more to be accomplished over the next year at the School of Nursing, and I look forward to working with each of you to make this another successful year.

EUN-OK IM, PHD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN

Dean

The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing
Professor and Laura Lee Blanton Chair in Nursing



The University of Texas at Austin
School of Nursing

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SERVICE

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you think about this issue of Longhorn Nursing.



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AI Revolutionizes Dementia Caregiving

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into health care has revolutionized the industry, offering innovative solutions to complex challenges. Among the various domains within health care, nursing stands at the forefront of this transformation, harnessing AI to enhance patient care, optimize workflows and improve outcomes.

Researchers, such as Bo Xie, PhD, FGSA, professor at the School of Nursing, are turning to innovative solutions, such as AI to provide tailored support and services to caregivers. Xie and her interdisciplinary research team are harnessing the power of AI to address the information wants of caregivers for persons living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). Xie said her research, for over 20 years, has focused on examining the intersection of aging, health and information technology.

"AI is changing everything we know of as we speak, and the rate will only increase from here on," Xie said. "Scary but at the same time exciting. AI will become part of the infrastructure, much like electricity or running water, before we know it. It will change nursing practice, education and research, whether or not we like it. We can't stop it; the best we can do is to get into the game, and early on, to hopefully play a role in shaping its direction."

The challenges of caregiving

ADRD presents a significant public health challenge, with caregivers often bearing the weight of providing extensive daily care. People with ADRD are usually cared for by family members or friends, with 80 percent of people with ADRD receiving care in their homes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every year, more than 16 million Americans provide more than 17 billion hours of unpaid care for family and friends with ADRD, highlighting the immense burden placed on families and communities. However, caregivers frequently struggle to access sufficient information and support to navigate the challenges of caregiving.

Xie's research project, "Tailoring Responses to ADRD Caregivers' Information Wants Through Human-Machine Collaboration (TRACO)," received a \$561,417 grant from the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health.

She is conducting this interdisciplinary research with Daqing He, PhD, professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Computing and Information. Co-investigators on the project include Robin Hilsabeck, PhD, ABPP, director of the Comprehensive Memory

Center in the Mulva Clinic for the Neurosciences at Dell Medical School, and Alyssa Aguirre, LCSW-S, assistant director of Dementia Care Transformation for the Department of Neurology at Dell Medical School and assistant professor of practice at UT Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work.

This high-priority research project seeks to bridge the gap in caregiving support by leveraging human-machine collaboration to deliver personalized information and services to caregivers.

"AI is changing everything we know of as we speak, and the rate will only increase from here on. Scary but at the same time exciting."

— Bo Xie

Creating a knowledge base

The TRACO project is grounded in interdisciplinary collaboration, drawing on expertise in nursing, informatics and social work to address the multifaceted needs of ADRD caregivers. The research team aims to develop a comprehensive knowledge base informed by insights from caregivers themselves, obtained through the analysis of social media posts and existing information resources.

This knowledge base will serve as the foundation for a tailoring engine, capable of delivering tailored responses to caregivers based on their unique characteristics, caregiving scenarios and information preferences.

The TRACO system will be implemented as a mobile application interface, ensuring accessibility and usability for caregivers in their daily lives.

TRACO exemplifies the transformative potential of AI in addressing the unmet needs of ADRD caregivers. By harnessing the power of human-machine collaboration, TRACO seeks to revolutionize caregiving support, providing personalized information and services to caregivers when and where they need it most.

As we navigate the challenges posed by ADRD, innovative solutions such as TRACO offer hope for a future where caregivers receive the support and recognition they deserve.

The demands of caregiving can limit a caregiver's ability to take care of themselves. Family caregivers of people with ADRD are at greater risk for anxiety, depression and poorer quality of life than caregivers of people with other conditions.

Meaningful support

The potential impact of the TRACO project is profound, offering a transformative approach to supporting ADRD caregivers in their vital role. Caregivers often face overwhelming challenges, from managing complex medical needs to navigating emotional and practical concerns.

By providing personalized information and support tailored to the diverse needs of caregivers, TRACO aims to empower caregivers with the knowledge and resources necessary to address these challenges more effectively.

One of the key strengths of TRACO lies in its ability to deliver tailored responses that resonate with caregivers on a personal level. By drawing insights from caregivers themselves, through the analysis of social media posts and existing

"AI will become part of the infrastructure, much like electricity or running water, before we know it. It will change nursing practice, education and research, whether or not we like it. We can't stop it; the best we can do is to get into the game, and early on, to hopefully play a role in shaping its direction."

— Bo Xie



Bo Xie
PhD, FGSA

information resources, TRACO ensures that the support it offers is relevant and meaningful.

Whether caregivers are seeking guidance on medication management, strategies for coping with behavioral symptoms, or resources for respite care, TRACO can provide targeted assistance that aligns with their unique circumstances and preferences.

By leveraging AI and digital technology, TRACO has the potential to reach caregivers on a large scale, transcending geographical barriers and enabling widespread access to support services.

Caregivers often face logistical challenges in accessing traditional support resources, such as attending in-person support groups or consulting with health-care professionals.



TRACO's mobile application interface ensures that caregivers can access support whenever and wherever they need it, whether they are at home, at work or on the go. This accessibility is particularly crucial for caregivers from underserved communities, who may face additional barriers to accessing support services.

In addition to enhancing the quality of care and reducing caregivers' stress, TRACO has the potential to foster a sense of community and solidarity among caregivers.

Caregiving can be isolating, with caregivers often feeling overwhelmed and disconnected from others who share similar experiences. TRACO's digital platform provides a space for caregivers to connect, share stories and offer support.

By fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie, TRACO helps caregivers feel less alone in their journey, strengthening their resilience and well-being.

Xie's TRACO research represents a promising step forward in supporting ADRD caregivers and addressing the unmet needs of this vulnerable population.

By combining the power of AI with insights from caregivers themselves, TRACO offers a personalized and accessible approach to caregiving support, paving the way for a future where caregivers receive the recognition, resources and assistance they deserve.

Health Information Technology's Game-Changing Role



Kavita Radhakrishnan
PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, FAHA

In today's rapidly evolving health care landscape, technology is increasingly playing a pivotal role in reshaping patient care and outcomes. Among the groundbreaking innovations emerging in this realm is the integration of gaming devices into health care practices, particularly in the management of chronic conditions like heart failure. Leading this transformative initiative is Kavita Radhakrishnan, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, FAHA, associate professor, with her research in leveraging sensor-controlled digital games (SCDGs) to enhance health care delivery.

Radhakrishnan's journey into health care technology began with a deep-rooted commitment to improving patient self-care behaviors. Recognizing the limitations of traditional telehealth methods in effectively engaging patients, she explored innovative solutions that could bridge the gap between data collection and meaningful self-care actions.

"Since 2010, my research has always centered around using technology to empower individuals to take better care of themselves," Radhakrishnan said. "This mission was deeply personal for me, stemming from the loss of several family members to

heart disease at a young age. Witnessing my own father's battle with heart failure further fueled my determination to develop tools that could prevent early deaths and enhance the quality of life for those affected by cardiovascular conditions."

Winning at well-being

Driven by this personal mission, Radhakrishnan's research evolved over the years, developing SCDGs designed to empower patients in managing their heart failure. Collaborating with experts across disciplines, including electrical engineering, computer science and game development, Radhakrishnan and her team meticulously crafted devices that seamlessly integrate behavior-tracking sensors with engaging digital interfaces.

The goal of the study is to assess whether digital tools, such as the game "Heart Health Mountain," can help participants improve their adherence to important self-management behaviors, such as daily physical activity and weight monitoring.

Participants receive an activity tracker and smart scale, which is synchronized with the game, so participants can progress

up the mountain as they meet their daily goals for activity and weight monitoring.

The goal of the game is to keep their "heart health" score high. Throughout the game, they can also win coins that can be redeemed to buy accessories for their avatar.

Participants do not "win" the game, but rather progress as far as they can up the mountain, through many interactive levels, during the six-month study period.

"The transition to gaming medium stemmed from a desire to empower patients with real-time insights into their health status and self-care behaviors," she added. "By visualizing daily behaviors and their implications for health outcomes, we aim to motivate patients to adopt healthier habits and achieve optimal well-being."

Building upon the success of initial pilot studies, Radhakrishnan secured substantial funding from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to further evaluate the efficacy of SCDGs in improving heart failure management. These grants, totaling \$6.5 million, represent a significant investment in advancing health information technology and its application in patient care.

An evolving approach

Recognizing the diverse cultural landscapes within which health care interventions operate, Radhakrishnan emphasizes the importance of cultural adaptability and community engagement in her research endeavors.

Collaborating on other research projects with experts like, Jada Brooks, PhD, MSPH, RN, FAAN, associate professor from The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill School of Nursing and John Lowe, PhD, RN, FAAN, Joseph H. Blades Centennial Memorial Professorship in Nursing at the School of Nursing, she wants to ensure that SCDGs resonate with the unique values and preferences of diverse populations.

Radhakrishnan's collaborative study with Brooks, funded by a \$3.8 million NIH grant, will determine whether her SCDGs to manage heart failure are culturally adaptable. Working with the Lumbee Native American Tribe in North Carolina, they are using 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 collaboration with Allison Crawford, PhD, RN, assistant professor from UT Health San Antonio School of Nursing, and Janice Hernandez, DNP, RN, FNP-C, clinical associate professor at the School of Nursing, the team has developed a Spanish language version of the heart health game.

“Witnessing my own father’s battle with heart failure further fueled my determination to develop tools that could prevent early deaths and enhance the quality of life for those affected by cardiovascular conditions.”

— Kavita Radhakrishnan

"As technology evolves, so too must our approach to health care delivery," Radhakrishnan said. "By actively engaging with communities and soliciting their input, we strive to create interventions that are not only effective but also culturally relevant and accessible to all."

Enhancing patient outcomes

At the heart of Radhakrishnan's research lies a spirit of collaboration and teamwork. Recognizing the contributions of her interdisciplinary team and research colleagues, she attributes much of the project's success to their collective efforts and expertise.

"My team and I have been fortunate to work with outstanding individuals across various disciplines, each bringing unique insights and perspectives to the table," she added. "Through our collaborative endeavors, we have been able to push the boundaries of health care innovation and make meaningful contributions to patient care."

As health care continues to evolve in response to technological advancements, the integration of gaming medium holds tremendous promise for enhancing patient outcomes and transforming the delivery of care.

Through her research in leveraging SCDGs for heart failure management, Radhakrishnan has emerged as a trailblazer in the field of health information technology, reshaping the future of health care one game at a time.

"As we look to the future, our focus remains on scaling up our research efforts and ensuring that our interventions are accessible to all," Radhakrishnan concluded. "By harnessing the power of technology and embracing a patient-centered approach, we can truly revolutionize the way we manage chronic conditions and improve the lives of patients worldwide."



Sensor-Controlled Digital Game – Climb a heart health mountain

Game responsive to real-time behaviors

- Adaptive step goal
- Heart health point
- Bite-sized chunks of info about heart failure
- Mini-games
- Quiz questions
- Behavior quests
- Leaderboard
- Shop

The School of Nursing Unveils Four New Centers

The School of Nursing established four new centers to help enhance the School's landscape of nursing education and research. Each center embodies the School of Nursing's dedication to empowering faculty and students to contribute to the health and well-being of communities worldwide.

CENTER FOR GLOBAL NURSING AND HEALTH

Fostering Global Collaborations in Nursing Education and Research

The new Center for Global Nursing and Health is led by Interim Director Julie Zuñiga, PhD, RN, FAAN, associate professor. The Center aims to connect nursing education and research stakeholders from communities around the world.

"Our goal is to cultivate a vibrant ecosystem of collaboration, where faculty and students can engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas and contribute to the collective body of nursing knowledge," Zuñiga said. "By fostering partnerships with institutions around the world, we aim to create opportunities for cross-cultural learning and interdisciplinary research."

Sharing their motivations for being a part of the Center, Zuñiga said it's part of her professional and personal goals to work globally. "I've always believed in the power of international collaboration to enhance nursing education and improve health care outcomes worldwide," she added.

Hyekyun Rhee, PhD, RN, FAAN, La Quinta Motor Inns, Inc. Centennial Professor, who was the founding director, shares a similar sentiment. "It's not just about academic collaboration; it's about creating a more interconnected and empathetic world," Rhee said.

One way the Center is extending the School's presence internationally is through formalized Memoranda of Understanding with international universities. Having MOUs established at the university level allows for other academic units on campus to add programming with these partner universities.

These efforts were commemorated in May 2024 when leaders from UT Austin School of Nursing visited the leaders of colleges of nursing at three universities in South Korea—Yonsei University, Seoul National University and The Catholic University of Korea to build upon established university-level agreements to explore specific areas of collaboration.

With these signed agreements, the School will work to add

"We believe the exposure to diverse cultures and health care systems is essential for cultivating the next generation of nursing leaders."

— Hyekyun Rhee



Dr. Julie Zuñiga



Dr. Hyekyun Rhee

nursing-specific addenda with details about various programs the School hopes to run moving forward. Texas Global assisted in the efforts to broaden the scope of activities and the School of Nursing's global position.

When the Center launched, Rhee highlighted the importance of leadership development and global awareness in preparing students for roles on the international stage. Through initiatives such as education abroad programs and exchange opportunities, the Center seeks to empower students to become effective leaders in the global health care arena.

"We believe the exposure to diverse cultures and health care systems is essential for cultivating the next generation of nursing leaders," Rhee said. "By providing students with opportunities to engage in global initiatives and immerse themselves in different contexts, we aim to broaden their perspectives and equip them with the skills needed to address complex health challenges on a global scale."

Learn more at nursing.utexas.edu/research/cgnh

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS

Unveiling the Future: Innovations in Health Care Technology

The Center for Health Care Innovation and Technology Advancements (CHITA) represents a new era of cutting-edge solutions and transformative advancements in health care. CHITA is directed by Bo Xie, PhD, FGSA, professor, and co-directed by Wonshik Chee, PhD, research professor.

The Center promotes innovative, interdisciplinary research to advance health care processes and outcomes through person-centered technological design, development, implementation and use that address real-world challenges faced by patients, families and clinicians.

Xie said the new center is strengthening collaboration between tenure-track and clinical-track faculty at the School of Nursing, combining clinicians' expertise in identifying real-world problems and researchers' expertise in developing effective interventions for problem-solving.

"Within UT Austin, now is an ideal time to also strengthen collaboration across campus—specifically between health science disciplines and technology-oriented disciplines like engineering, computer science and information science—to address health care challenges through interdisciplinary solutions," she said.

In addition, Xie said health care innovation within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) community typically features technology advancements that present unprecedented approaches to improving health care processes and outcomes. The pursuit of innovation also extends beyond the classroom and laboratory at the School of Nursing.

The Dean's Office is providing support for groundbreaking research at the intersection of nursing and technology through CHITA's inaugural Health IT Speedy Proposal Assistance and Research Knowledge Grants (Health IT SPARK Grants). The Health IT SPARK Grants provide up to \$20,000 per awardee to aid in the advancement of cutting-edge research and position individuals for potential NIH funding in the near future.

The first round of awards went to recipients who are



Dr. Bo Xie



Dr. Wonshik Chee

poised to make significant contributions to the field of health care technology:

- Shaoqing Ge, PhD, MPH, RN, assistant professor at the School of Nursing, and Min Kyung Lee, PhD, assistant professor at the UT Austin School of Information, received a grant for their research project "Understanding the Challenges of and Prototyping an AI Chatbot Intervention for Dementia Caregivers with Hearing or Vision Impairment."
- Megan Hebdon, PhD, DNP, RN, NP-c, former assistant professor, and Heather Cuevas, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC, FCNS, assistant professor, in the School of Nursing, received a grant for their project "Technology for Wellness and Weight Loss: An Integrative Approach."
- Li-Chen Lin, PhD, RN, CNRN, clinical assistant professor in the School of Nursing, received a grant for her research titled "Developing a Person-Centered, Game-based Learning to Improve Medication Management among People with Limited-English-Proficiency: A Pilot Feasibility Study."

One of the hallmarks of CHITA is its emphasis on collaboration. By bringing together experts from diverse fields such as nursing, engineering, computer science and information science, the Center cultivates a rich environment of fresh ideas and innovative solutions.

At the heart of CHITA's mission is a commitment to driving innovation in patient care. From developing novel technologies that enhance diagnosis and treatment to leveraging data analytics for predictive modeling and personalized medicine, the Center is helping find solutions that have the potential to revolutionize health care delivery and improve patient outcomes.

In addition to its research endeavors, CHITA plays a role in educating the next generation of health care leaders and innovators. Through its educational programs and experiential learning opportunities, the Center equips students with the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to navigate the complexities of modern health care and drive meaningful change.

Xie said CHITA is initially focusing on securing NIH R01 grants where the School of Nursing is the lead institution. From there, additional researchers across the School, as well as other

colleges, schools and units at UT Austin, will be invited to join as members of the executive board or affiliates.

The Center will host seminars and workshops to help faculty develop interdisciplinary collaboration skills. These opportunities will also serve as a collaboration incubator where CHITA will further cultivate interdisciplinary collaborations that lead to large NIH grants to support impactful research.

Eventually, Xie would like to gain more involvement from researchers within and outside of UT Austin. This would include hosting conferences with national and international participation to strengthen the Center's leadership on the national and international levels.

Learn more at sites.utexas.edu/chita

CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS

Elevating Data Science Support for Faculty and Students

The Center for Advanced Research Methods provides data science support to School of Nursing faculty and students, guiding them toward achieving exceptional research outcomes. Center Director Shelli Kesler, PhD, who holds the Dr. Mary Louise Adams Endowed Professorship in Oncology Nursing, aims to help increase the data science resources available to faculty and students within the School of Nursing. Kesler also serves as director of statistical services for the Cain Center for Nursing Research, assisting faculty with data analysis plans for grant applications, conducting data analysis for manuscripts and providing feedback on student dissertation data analyses.

"My research focuses on computational modeling and artificial intelligence," Kesler said. "Data science knowledge has been critical in my academic success, so I am honored and excited to share it with others."

CARM provides statistical consultation, pre-submission grant application critiques and data science-focused workshops. The Center has a dedicated data scientist for quantitative analyses, and supervises graduate research assistants who provide basic statistical assistance to students and faculty.

“My research focuses on computational modeling and artificial intelligence. Data science knowledge has been critical in my academic success, so I am honored and excited to share it with others.”

— Shelli Kesler

School of Nursing students can obtain statistical analysis assistance with their research projects and dissertations. Students will receive expert advice on optimizing research design for methodological rigor and feasibility. They will also receive a customized consultation to guide them through the analytical aspects of their dissertation work.

CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS (CARM) IN ACTION

A few resources the Center has offered to School of Nursing faculty since launching in Spring 2024:

- A workshop "Grant Applications from a Data Science Perspective," focused on constructing testable specific aims and ensuring that research questions can be answered using rigorous and effective methods.
- A workshop about using reference managers, where individuals learned how to use Endnotes or Mendeley to organize citations for manuscripts and grants.
- An NIH Cycle Bootcamp that provided expert guidance for constructing successful grant applications.

WHAT CAN CARM DO FOR YOU?

CARM is committed to augmenting the success rates in securing research grants and ensuring efficient and impactful use by:

- Offering specialized support in the data analysis aspects of grant proposal development, data collection and management.
- Vetting research methods, statistical analysis plans and power calculation to strengthen the competitiveness of the proposal.
- Providing formal reviews and critiques of grant proposals from an interdisciplinary group of experienced senior faculty.
- Offering regular workshops on the components of successful grant applications focusing on effect size and power considerations, statistically testable aims, as well as rigorous, reproducible design.

Learn more at nursing.utexas.edu/research/carm

Dean Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN, is committed to increasing the School of Nursing's portfolio of externally funded research. CARM's mission to empower faculty and students through the provision of advanced data analysis tools and robust data science education aligns with Dean Im's goal by providing essential data science support that is critical for conducting rigorous, impactful research.

Central to CARM's mission is the advancement of data science education. By integrating cutting-edge data analysis techniques, predictive modeling and machine learning into the curriculum, the Center provides a strong foundation for students and faculty to excel in data-driven research.



Dr. Shelli Kesler

The approach is rooted in the principles of precision medicine, ensuring that the School of Nursing is well-equipped to generate actionable insights and foster data-driven decision-making.

Li-Chen Lin, PhD, RN, CNRN, clinical assistant professor, said CARM has provided valuable assistance with her research. "I think it is great to have this type of support for faculty, and I hope we can keep this service available," Lin said. "I plan to work with the Center to design my data collection to maximize efficiency in data collection and analysis."

While CARM currently offers quantitative analysis support, Kesler said she would like to expand to include qualitative data analysis support.

The Center is initially focusing on inferential analysis services, as these are the most commonly requested, but, in the future, Kesler plans to include more machine learning and big data resources.

Learn more at nursing.utexas.edu/research/carm

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting Faculty in Professional Growth

The Center for Professional Development and Scholarship is led by Director Nicole Murry, PhD, RN, clinical assistant professor, and Co-Director Lorraine Walker, EdD, MPH, RN, Luci B. Johnson Centennial Professor.

The mission of the CPDS is to establish comprehensive support mechanisms tailored to nursing faculty, addressing the need for innovative teaching strategies in all classrooms and enhanced guidance for professional track and newly hired tenure-track faculty in scholarly activities, such as manuscript authorship and professional presentations.

"It is common for faculty—particularly professional track faculty—to put most of their attention and energy into their students and the management of their courses," Murry said. "While this is incredibly important to the successful development of our nursing students, it often leaves little time to focus on professional development or scholarly endeavors. We hope to provide support and assistance for faculty that may save them time in the long run."

The Center was developed with input directly from those the Center serves. They hosted five focus groups of faculty members to learn more about their needs, goals and barriers related to professional development and scholarship.

"Our faculty are so talented and have so many wonderful ideas for research and teaching innovations. The Center can help plan for and disseminate these types of projects," Murry said.

The CPDS assists faculty by providing resources and addressing barriers, including the need for greater awareness of upcoming conferences, workshops or deadlines for abstracts; additional mentorship and/or support groups when working on scholarly endeavors needed; the lack of clarity and guidance regarding faculty mentorship of students; and the lack of confidence for converting teaching innovations into scholarly work.

The Center's website serves as the main repository of resources for faculty, including a list of upcoming workshops, trainings, research interests among faculty, networking opportunities and support for manuscript authorship and professional presentations.

Murry and Walker hope the Center becomes a place where faculty can find resources for their projects related to scholarship and professional development and a place where faculty come together to share ideas and cultivate partnerships.

"It is no secret that some of the most innovative and productive researchers are often part of a group of talented people," Murry said. The CPDS provides resources and support to faculty in applying forward-thinking teaching methods.

Katie Sanders, DNP, RN, CNE, clinical assistant professor, serves as an instructional specialist, working one-on-one with faculty to provide support as a mentor and facilitator for executing new teaching ideas.

"I feel so fortunate to work alongside so many talented faculty. This is such a tremendous way to ensure all have the chance to shine," Murry said.

Learn more at nursing.utexas.edu/cpds



Dr. Nicole Murry

Dr. Lorraine Walker



A LIFETIME OF SERVICE AND EXCELLENCE:

Linda Yoder Retires after Years of Dedication to Nursing and Education

Many people at the School of Nursing knew Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN as a professor, Luci Baines Johnson Fellow in Nursing and researcher before retiring in 2024 as professor emerita.

But she's also been known as Colonel Yoder—a rank she earned after a 28-year career in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps (ANC) before retiring in September 2002. Her military career included positions at Walter Reed Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston and stints in South Korea and Italy.

After her military service, Yoder sought an opportunity to teach the next generation of nurses when then-Dean Dolores Sands asked her to interview for a faculty position.

Yoder served at the School of Nursing for 17 years in a variety of positions while teaching, including director of the Nursing Administration Concentration. Before the program ended, it was highly ranked by the U.S. News & World Report.

At the time, it was the only program ranked in the School of Nursing, Yoder said. She also taught graduate health care systems management courses, as well as advised and coached Master's and Doctoral students.

Honors for exceptional teaching

In 2014, former School of Nursing professor Terry Jones, PhD, RN, asked Yoder if she would do a quick faculty presentation. After agreeing, she was told not to prepare a slideshow and that the presentation would be a brief overview with time for questions and answers. Several faculty members, as well as then-Dean Alexa Stuijbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN, attended, and Yoder learned it was being filmed for those who couldn't attend.

Yoder was surprised to learn later that the filming was for the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN). Jones informed her she was being awarded the President's Award from the AMSN. Yoder was unable to attend the convention, so the video was sent to the AMSN to show during the event.

"It's hard to surprise me, but that was a complete surprise," Yoder said. "I was very honored and humbled to receive that award."

She has also earned dozens of honors for oncology nursing, medical-surgical nursing and nursing excellence, among others. Yoder received the UT Austin Billye J. Brown Award for Excellence in Leadership and the Epsilon Theta Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau Dolores Sands Outstanding Researcher Award.

Yoder is an alumna of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nursing Fellowship and a past president of the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses. She is a member of several professional nursing organizations, including the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, the Oncology Nursing Society, the Association of Nurse Executives, the American Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau International.

Continuing to serve

Yoder described her experience at the School of Nursing as invaluable and one she will never forget.

"After my career in the Army, I believe working at the School of Nursing allowed me to continue to serve the nation and the state of Texas," she said.

Yoder was an officer in the ANC for 28 years, retiring at the rank of Colonel. Born in Germany and raised in a military family, Yoder was a first-generation student and was the first to graduate from high school and go to college with a scholarship from the Army.

"I will forever be indebted to the Army for supporting my education from BSN to PhD," she added. "The Army also developed me as a leader and teacher."

During her time in the Corps, Yoder led innovative research efforts in oncology, as well as initiatives aimed at improving patient care outcomes. Recognized for her contributions to nursing research, she received the Phyllis J. Verhonick Award in 1990 and 1992. This honor is presented to an Army nurse who demonstrates excellence in research that significantly contributes to nursing and improves patient care outcomes.

As a researcher, Yoder spent most of her career working and conducting research in hospitals. Her areas of research have included examining patient care problems, the nursing work environment, career development relationships of nurses and quality of life in patients with chronic illnesses, such as cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary disease, as well as burn survivors.

To this day, Yoder continues to collaborate with active-duty military researchers, serving as a research mentor to new investigators. She also collaborates with the hospital systems in the Austin region. Even as she transitions to a new phase, Yoder plans to remain involved in academia, continuing her own scholarship and contributing to the UT Austin community.

"Scholarship does not end at retirement," Yoder said.

Dedicated to research

While at the School of Nursing, Yoder completed a variety of projects, including research dealing with longitudinal quality of life outcomes of burn patients treated at the military burn center in San Antonio, qualitative research about Intensive Care Unit nurses' experiences during COVID-19, and secondary analysis of military nurses' post-deployment posttrau-

"My biggest accomplishment is the students that I have helped and have graduated with their graduate degrees. I maintained high standards and expectations from my students, but I knew they could meet my expectations and they did, even when they didn't believe they could."

— Linda Yoder



Linda Yoder receives the Expert Field Medical Badge from the Battalion Commander of the 1st of the 509th Airborne Infantry. She is the only woman to have earned this badge with this unit.

matic growth experiences.

Yoder has also completed a national study of medical-surgical nurses' experiences of posttraumatic growth after the pandemic, as well as studies examining medical-surgical nurses' evidence-based practice competencies.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Yoder's impact extended to becoming a dedicated educator and mentoring students at the School of Nursing. Yoder mostly taught graduate students—MSN, DNP and PhD.

While at the School of Nursing, military PhD students came to the School to

specifically work with her. She says she's worked with about six Army nurse MSN and PhD students, as well as 17 civilian PhD and DNP students, who have all done exceptionally well in the program. She will continue to work with several PhD students at the School of Nursing until they graduate.

Leading through teaching

Reflecting on her legacy as an educator, Yoder emphasized the impact she's had on not only military but also civilian students. She takes pride in the leadership roles her military PhD students have assumed within the ANC, as well as instilling a sense of scholarly excellence and leadership in her civilian students. Despite facing pushback from some MSN and DNP students due to her high standards, Yoder remained committed to upholding rigorous academic expectations.

"I'm never going to make an excuse for myself in terms of having high standards," she added. "I will own up to that. And I think they find out later, some of the students because sometimes they email me or they'll send me a note, they realize later that, that was the right thing even though they didn't appreciate it at the time."

She stresses the importance of fostering leadership at all levels in nursing and advocating for lifelong learning, both for herself and her students.

"My biggest accomplishment is the students that I have helped and have graduated with their graduate degrees," she said. "I maintained high standards and expectations from my students, but I knew they could meet my expectations and they did, even when they didn't believe they could."

Yoder said she hopes the students she's taught over the years remember her for the ways she cared for them as people and as nurses.

"I wanted to help develop them into the best versions of themselves as nurses," she added.

She shared that her favorite aspect about teaching nursing students is that nurses care about people, and they want to serve their communities. She considers nurses to be the linchpin that holds the health care system together.

"Nursing is hard work regardless of the setting," she added. "You must be passionate about nursing as a career and providing the best possible outcomes for patients, families and students. Expect the best of yourself and your peers."



EMPOWERING NURSES TO LEAD:

DNP Graduate Jennie Joyner’s Path to Impactful Leadership

During her time at the School of Nursing as a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student, Spring 2024 graduate Jennifer (Jennie) Joyner, DNP, MSN, CPNP-AC, experienced personal and professional growth.

Before completing her studies, Joyner began applying the skills she acquired by assuming leadership roles. She serves as the president for the Austin chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners. Additionally, along with her fellow DNP graduate, friend and colleague Vickie Goodwin, she co-founded an Advanced Practice Provider Council at St. David’s North Austin Medical Center, where they both practice.

Joyner’s dedication to advancing pediatric care extended to her involvement

Early in her DNP journey, Joyner published a systematic review examining factors contributing to the frequent hospital readmissions of late preterm infants. Her analysis, utilizing data from the Health Care Cost and Utilization Project: Kid Database, shed light not only on clinical considerations but also on the significant impact of social determinants of health on health care costs. Through her research, she and her team developed a predictive model identifying factors associated with higher health care expenditures, sparking vital discussions on the integration of non-medical determinants into care delivery.

Joyner emphasizes that social determinants, such as birthplace, living conditions and socioeconomic status, have a substantial influence—approximately 50 to 80 percent on an individual’s overall

career goals, focusing instead on personal growth and professional fulfillment.

“You get your DNP because you want to impact nursing or patient care on a deeper level, and you want to contribute to the care plan for patients to treat and diagnose differently—more responsibly,” Joyner said. “And I have to say, earning my DNP is the best decision I ever made. It reignited my love of the nursing profession. I think coming back into the academic setting and being able to connect with why good, effective leadership is so important and why navigating systems is so important. That’s why it’s important for nurses to lead and have a voice at the table.”

Joyner credits her professors, including the late Gayle Acton, PhD, RN, for igniting her passion for nursing and instilling in her a sense of purpose. Joyner said Acton’s emphasis on nurses’ responsibility to advocate for change and actively engage in the health care system resonated deeply with Joyner, motivating her to present her work and pursue initiatives to improve practice.

“Gayle Acton was amazing, so kind and always made me feel so welcome,” Joyner said. “She would tell you things that made you feel like you truly belong. It was the first time, in a large institution, where I felt something so personal, like me being here mattered.”

Central to Joyner’s educational journey was Acton’s course on nursing theory and philosophy, which emphasized the distinctive humanistic approach that sets nursing apart. As part of the course, students were asked to draw from their own experiences and develop their own personal practice models. Joyner developed the Caring CURE, an acronym for the concepts of compassion, understanding, reflection and empathy.

“I use the Caring CURE every day in my nursing practice and how I interact with people in my leadership roles,” she said. “To be able to take concepts inspired by work from nursing ancestors and how they were utilized and then apply it to how I take care of people and how I show up in my profession—it’s transformational.”

The inspiration Joyner gained from her professors is what led her and Goodwin to propose the Advanced Practice

“Our voices are vital, nurses’ voices are vital, and we need a variety of voices at the table and need a variety of teams taking care of people.”

— Jennie Joyner

in research aimed at improving the care of late preterm infants. Her research, titled “Social Determinants of Health Affecting Health Care Cost in Near-Term Infants: Analysis from a National Cohort,” was selected for presentation at the Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting in Toronto in May 2024.

As an acute care pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in newborn nursery settings, Joyner has a profound connection with late preterm infants, born between 34 and 36 weeks. Despite often being comparable in size and weight to term babies, these infants face heightened risks due to their physiological and metabolic immaturity, making them a particularly vulnerable population that Joyner feels is often overlooked and understudied.

health, shadowing the comparatively minor contribution of health care interventions. She emphasizes the importance of addressing these factors to optimize long-term health outcomes effectively across the lifespan.

“While it’s important to understand all of the things we’re doing in the health care setting, if we don’t care about other factors that influence health outcomes and think about how to optimize care through that lens, we can’t improve the whole health for that person in the long term,” she added.

For Joyner, pursuing her DNP was driven by a desire to cultivate leadership skills and effect systemic change, inspired by her experiences in advanced practice roles within the hospital setting. Her decision marked a departure from traditional



Jennifer (Jennie) Joyner
DNP, MSN, CPNP-AC

“You get your DNP because you want to impact nursing or patient care on a deeper level, and you want to contribute to the care plan for patients to treat and diagnose differently – more responsibly.”

— Jennie Joyner

Council to their hospital administration. Fellow DNP graduate Jacob Paul, DNP ‘24, MSN, BSN ‘14 also played a role in getting the Council off the ground. Paul was brought on as the Council secretary and helped with the beginning formation and planning. This initiative has empowered advanced practice providers to actively participate in policy development and shared governance, driving educational and quality improvement initiatives across the hospital system.

The Council’s efforts have been recognized at the highest levels, with invitations to submit biannual reports to the Medical Executive Board and contribute to defining the scope of practice for advanced practice providers. Their interdisciplinary approach seeks to foster collaboration, recognizing the many perspectives essential for effective health care delivery.

“We all need to show up, too, because we’re all part of this intricate system that works together,” Joyner added. “With the development of the Advanced Practice Council, we’re hoping to give light to a different lens that’s not just ‘this or that,’ but incorporates more viewpoints to help the health care system function at its best.”

Reflecting on her journey, Joyner emphasizes the vital role of nurses’ voices in shaping health care delivery. She advocates for embracing diversity and fostering collaboration across disciplines, highlighting the interconnectedness of individual experiences within the broader health care system.

“Nurses’ voices are vital, and we need a variety of voices at the table and need a variety of teams taking care of people,” Joyner said. “For health care to truly take the best care of people, we have to think outside the box and connect with others different from ourselves. And that’s so true in nursing. We need to connect with different kinds of nurses. We need to connect with different levels of nursing, different generations of nursing and different backgrounds within nursing. And then, we need to connect with different disciplines outside of nursing.

“No one is alike, and the more we can understand ourselves and each other, the better we can connect to take care of the whole,” she continued. “All this work I do is a raindrop in the ocean of possibilities, as Rumi said, ‘We are not a raindrop in the ocean, we are the entire ocean in the raindrop.’ We need to reflect the values we want to bring to the care we give, and see those values reflected in the outcomes we measure.”



Beasley Family Pays Tribute to Tamra Kay Beasley by Investing in Nursing Education

The School of Nursing is honored to announce a significant donation from the Beasley family, who are well-known figures in Austin, Texas.

This generous contribution is made in memory of Tamra Kay Beasley, BSN '90, who passed away earlier this year.

"Being a nurse and taking care of others was her true passion and calling," said Tamra's daughter, Avery Bon. "We chose to donate this gift in her name to honor her 30-plus years of nursing, and to hopefully help students have the same experience and impact she did in the community. Tamra Kay Beasley would be proud to know she is giving the gift of nursing education through this scholarship fund."

The scholarship fund established in Tamra Kay Beasley's name will ensure that her legacy of compassion and dedication to nursing continues to inspire and to empower students who share Tamra's passion for nursing and commitment to improving health care outcomes.

"Supporting the future Texas Nursing students gives our family hope that exceptional nurses, like Tamra, continue to graduate and elevate the medical field and community," Bon added.

Bon said one of her mother's fondest memories from her time at the School of Nursing was the friendship created between her and one of her lifelong friends, Julie Cox, BSN '90. They experienced some of life's fondest moments together, including graduating from the School of Nursing to getting married, starting families and watching them grow.

Beasley worked in Labor and Delivery at Georgetown Hospital and Seton Main, followed by a long tenure at Austin Area OB/GYN, where she was known for her empathy and dedication. Her interactions with patients often led to lifelong friendships.

These scholarships will help alleviate financial burdens for aspiring nurses through substantial support and scholarships for undergraduate nursing students, allowing them to focus on their studies and clinical education.

In a time when the demand for skilled nursing professionals is critically high, this support is invaluable.

"Supporting the future Texas Nursing students gives our family hope that exceptional nurses, like Tamra, continue to graduate and elevate the medical field and community."

— Avery Bon



Tamra Beasley



Tamra Beasley



Julie Cox, BSN '90 (left), Stephen Cox (middle) and Tamra Beasley, BSN '90 (right).

Julie Zuñiga's Research Aims to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes and Improve Health Outcomes in Hispanic Communities



Julie Zuñiga
PhD, RN, FAAN

Over their lifetime, U.S. adults have a 40 percent chance of developing type 2 diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, for Hispanic adults, the chance is more than 50 percent, and they are more likely to develop it at a younger age. Among this population, diabetes complications also tend to hit harder, leading to higher rates of kidney failure, diabetes-related vision loss and blindness. Hispanic adults are also more likely to be prediabetic, which is when blood sugar levels are higher than

"This award will go a long way to advance research on preventing diabetes in Hispanic populations by addressing causes beyond their control, such as social determinants of health," she added.

For example, Zuñiga said those who are living in poor housing, lack education or stable income, will have a greater chance of developing diabetes. The study will look at the impact of social determinants of health on glucose variability and glucose variability is a precursor to diabetes.

She explained how everyone's glucose levels fluctuate during the day when they're eating. However, if there are sev-

be used to help track glucose spikes and their potential causes.

Their goal is to determine if the constant glucose monitors will be an inventive way to help Hispanic adults without diabetes prevent the disease. This could also be a way to give faster feedback than going to the doctor every six months and getting their glucose levels checked. They will also investigate whether changes in glucose levels are related to social determinants of health.

For this study, they are targeting the group of Hispanic adults who are at extremely high risk of developing diabetes—ones whose parents have diabetes. Zuñiga said if a parent has diabetes, that makes them more likely to develop it, regardless of other factors.

Zuñiga has developed patient education materials about diabetes and prevention. She said that typically patients are educated once they're diagnosed, but individuals need to be informed if they're at high risk so they can make changes to their health in advance.

Another major element that will come out of this study is the participants will receive video clips of the research findings. Zuñiga and her team will develop the videos and build a library of instructions that will be used for a larger study based on what was initially found.

"This study will be sustainable because health insurance and health clinicians will find value in using these instruments to prevent illness, which could decrease health costs," Zuñiga said.

For Zuñiga, leading this research effort means she has the opportunity to give back to her community and address problems that will help Hispanic residents of Austin, as well as help herself and her family.

"I'm developing research that is useful to my community—something that they want and need would be the best way for me, as a nurse researcher, to work with my own family," she concluded.

"I'm developing research that is useful to my community—something that they want and need would be the best way for me, as a nurse researcher, to work with my own family."

— Julie Zuñiga

normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes.

For previous research projects, Julie Zuñiga, PhD, RN, FAAN, associate professor, worked on self-management of diabetes, but she found her research had the greatest impact when seeking to prevent diabetes in the Hispanic population.

She believes if there's a way to either delay or halt the onset or the progression of diabetes, it could help prevent serious health issues—and she has a personal connection to this goal.

"I'm Hispanic, and a lot of my family members have diabetes," Zuñiga said. "I'm excited about advancements in endocrinology research, especially as they could apply to my own family."

Zuñiga received the inaugural UT Austin School of Nursing Dean's Research Stimulus Pilot Award, which supports innovative concepts and approaches in nursing science/research to improve the health of patients, families and communities.

eral spikes of glucose, then the body isn't able to use the sugar as effectively as it should, which is called insulin insufficiency. Because of this, sometimes the levels will look normal, making it difficult to see the spikes in glucose. This also makes it challenging to know which foods cause the spikes to make necessary dietary changes.

Zuñiga is collaborating with Heather Cuevas, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC, FCNS, assistant professor; Alex García, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and associate dean for faculty affairs; and Beth Heitkemper, PhD, RN, assistant professor.

They are looking at using a constant glucose monitor, that is worn on the back of the arm, to calculate glucose levels around the clock. This method is mostly used on those who have diabetes that needs to be controlled by insulin, which has been extremely effective in maintaining levels throughout the day. They are investigating whether the monitor can

Dean Eun-Ok Im’s Innovative Approach to Cancer Pain Management



Eun-Ok Im
PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN

In the realm of cancer care, addressing the physical and emotional challenges faced by patients is vital. Dean Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN, a prominent researcher in the field, has embarked on a study to revolutionize cancer pain management, particularly among Asian American breast cancer survivors with depressive symptoms.

Im’s research stems from an understanding of the unique cultural dynamics in Asian American communities. Despite advancements in pain management strategies, Im says many Asian American patients exhibit a stoic reluctance to address their pain, often due to their cultural beliefs surrounding endurance and emotional expression.

According to Im, Asian American breast cancer survivors with depressive symptoms are more likely to have insuf-

ficient pain management due to their depression, which could lead to worsening depression and pain.

She also mentioned that the recent opioid crisis has exacerbated the fear of opioid addiction for many Asian American breast cancer patients, leading to a reluctance to seek help or take medication for pain management.

Her research project titled “Cancer Pain Management: A Technology-Based Intervention for Asian American Breast Cancer Survivors” is funded by a National Cancer Institute grant through the National Institutes of Health totaling over \$5 million. This study is a collaborative effort with Wonshik Chee, PhD, professor at UT Austin College of Education, and Hyekyun Rhee, PhD, RN, FAAN, School of Nursing Professor and La Quinta Motor Inns, Inc. Centennial Professor.

Based on preliminary studies, Im’s research team developed and pilot-tested an evidence-based web app-based information and coaching/support program for cancer pain management that was culturally tailored to Asian American breast cancer survivors using multiple unique features.

However, Im said cancer pain management rarely considers depressive symptoms accompanying pain, and preliminary studies showed the need for further individualization of the intervention components of cancer pain management due to the variety of needs of Asian American breast cancer survivors with depressive symptoms.

The technology-based cancer pain management program for Asian American breast cancer survivors with additional components and individual optimization—known as CAI for short—targets Chinese American, Korean American and Japanese American breast cancer survivors. The program, which is available in English, simplified Mandarin, traditional Mandarin, Korean and Japanese, uses a multifaceted approach to address both pain management and depressive symptoms.

This study will accelerate the translation of technology-based programs into health care and will be an important contribution to the pain management of cancer survivors with depressive symptoms. Ultimately, this study will contribute to reducing ethnic disparities in health/disease experience by providing directions for culturally competent health care services, specifically for adequate pain and symptom management of racial/ethnic minority cancer survivors.

“At the core of our program is the recognition that pain and depression are intricately linked,” Im said. “Our goal is not only to alleviate physical discomfort but also to provide holistic support for patients’ mental well-being.”

The development phase of CAI involved extensive modifications to existing survivorship programs, integrating tailored content specifically designed to address depressive symptoms. Utilizing machine learning algorithms, the program personalizes intervention components for participants.

CAI incorporates both individual and group components, leveraging online re-

empowered to seek help when needed.”

Im’s research represents hope for Asian American breast cancer survivors facing cultural barriers to care. Through randomized controlled trials and ongoing data collection, Im and her team aim to demonstrate the efficacy of CAI in improving patients’ quality of life.

Im hopes to expand the program to cover more Asian populations and even-



sources and social media platforms to foster community support and education.

“By providing a safe space for sharing experiences and accessing individualized coaching, participants are empowered to advocate for their own health and well-being,” Im added. “We aim to create a supportive community where patients feel understood, validated and

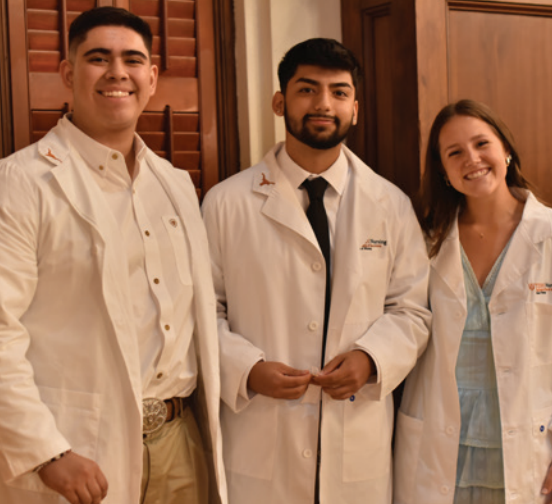
tuallly translate the findings into clinical practice, ensuring that cancer patients of all backgrounds receive the support and care they deserve.

Through collaboration with health care providers, policy makers and community organizations, Im envisions a health care landscape where cultural competence is seamlessly integrated into every aspect of cancer care.

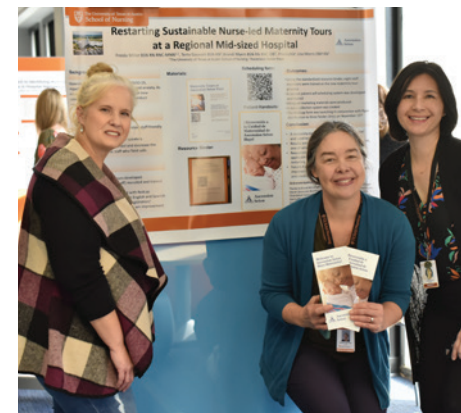
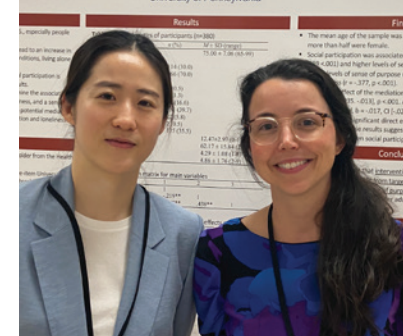
“At the core of our program is the recognition that pain and depression are intricately linked. Our goal is not only to alleviate physical discomfort but also to provide holistic support for patients’ mental well-being.”

— Eun-Ok Im





A Year in Photos



BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY: ARMY NURSE CORPS MEMBERS EXEMPLIFY DEDICATION TO NURSING SERVICE



(Left) Dr. Linda Yoder stands by a sign leading to the hospital where she worked for a year in South Korea, known as the 121st Field Hospital in Yongsan, South Korea. (Middle) Dr. Shalonda Horton attends a promotion ceremony, where her mom (Diane Brazzell) and dad (Jeff Brazzell) pinned her rank. (Right) Omar Cardona attends the UT ROTC Military Ball.

The U.S. Army Nurse Corps (ANC) stands as a testament to the commitment of health care professionals who have dedicated themselves to serving their country. From the battlefields of war to the halls of military hospitals, Army nurses exemplify courage, compassion and strength in the face of adversity. Established in 1901, the ANC has played a role in providing essential medical care to service members and their families. Its members are educated not only to deliver quality health care but also to navigate the unique challenges of military service.



Dr. Linda Yoder

At the heart of the ANC is a commitment to service, where individuals serve as military officers first and nurses second.

The School of Nursing counts two faculty members among the many exemplary individuals who have served in the ANC. Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN, professor emeritus, and Shalonda Horton, PhD, MSN, RN, clinical assistant professor, stand out as examples of dedication and service.

Serving her country

With a career in the ANC spanning decades, Yoder has made significant contributions to military nursing and health care. Born in Germany and raised in a military family, Yoder said her upbringing instilled in her an appreciation for service and sacrifice.

"I knew at a young age that I wanted to serve my country," Yoder said. "Joining the ANC was a natural choice for me." Yoder embarked on a path that would take her from the halls of nursing school to the front lines of patient care.

"At the heart of military nursing lies a journey of evolution and adaptation," she said. "I started as a bedside nurse, caring for soldiers on the front lines. But as I advanced in rank, I found myself in managerial roles, overseeing not just patient care but also the strategic operations of military medical facilities."

Yoder's journey embodies the mission of the ANC: "To provide responsive, innovative, and evidenced-based nursing care integrated on the Army Medical Team to enhance readiness, preserve life and function, and promote health and wellness for all those entrusted to our care."

"Service to country is the bedrock of military nursing," she said.

Men were not allowed to join the ANC until 1955, and ever since, the Corps has been approximately 70 percent female, while some of the jobs within the go-to-war units were only open to males until recently. When Yoder was stationed in Italy, she found herself in a unique position, serving alongside a predominantly male unit where she was often the only woman among hundreds of men. Despite this, she quickly earned the respect of her colleagues through her competence, strength and professionalism.

Her leadership abilities became evident as she rose through the ranks, assuming increasingly prominent roles within the ANC—retiring in September 2002 at the rank of colonel.

Her career in the ANC was marked by a pursuit of excellence and a commitment to lifelong learning. Driven by a passion for knowledge and a desire to expand her horizons, she pursued advanced degrees, earning her master's and PhD while serving.

From innovative research in oncology to leading initiatives aimed at improving patient care outcomes, she has made an impactful legacy on military health care. She received the Phyllis J. Verhonick Award from the ANC in 1990 and 1992 for her contributions to nursing research. This honor is presented to an Army nurse who demonstrates excellence in research that significantly contributes to nursing and improves patient care outcomes.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Yoder became a dedicated educator and mentor to nursing students and the next generation of military nurse leaders. "I wanted to pave the way for future generations of military nurses," she said. "It was important to me to ensure that all nurses, regardless of their background, had equal opportunities to succeed."

As she reflects on her years of service, Yoder remains humbled by the opportunities she was given and is grateful for the support she's received. "I am deeply honored to have served alongside some of the finest men and women in uniform," she said. "Together, we have faced adversity with courage and steadfastness, and I am proud of all that we have accomplished."

A dual identity



Dr. Shalonda Horton

Shalonda Horton, PhD, MSN, RN, also shares a rich and varied career in the ANC. Raised in a family with a strong military tradition, Horton's path into nursing was not a predetermined one. When she was a freshman in college, she initially wanted to become a doctor. Her best friend, who was a nursing student in the Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC), convinced Horton to give both a try.

"I loved my first nursing class," Horton said. "I fell in love with it." While in the ROTC program, she found not only a way to continue her education but also a sense of purpose and belonging.

After graduating, Horton served for a little over four years on active duty in the ANC and was stationed in locations across the globe, including Korea, that exposed her to a variety of challenges and experiences. "Just knowing that the world is bigger than you are and being able to collaborate with other people to take care of soldiers has been amazing," she said.

She transitioned into the reserves in 2000 to pursue her education further. Despite considering leaving the Army at times, she was inspired to stay and realized the importance of nursing

“In the military, you rely on your teammates for support and solidarity. That sense of camaraderie carries over into civilian nursing, where collaboration and mutual respect are essential for providing quality patient care.”

— Shalonda Horton



Dr. Shalonda Horton provides patient care to a retired soldier during her first year as a new nurse and as a 2nd Lieutenant.

in various roles beyond the bedside.

Horton emphasized the significance of nursing leadership, teamwork and holistic care. She appreciated the opportunities for training and development in the Army, even though some aspects, like soldiering skills, were initially challenging for her. She highlighted the importance of the decision-making skills she developed in the ANC and how they translated to civilian life.

The transition between military nursing and civilian life has been a journey of discovery, filled with both challenges and opportunities. She retired in January 2021 from the Army Reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel.

"There's definitely a bridge between the two worlds," Horton said. "While the settings may be different, the core principles of nursing remain the same: compassion, competence and commitment to patient care."

Based on her experiences in the military, Horton said the importance of adaptability and resilience in navigating the complexities of health care delivery are key for any nursing. "In the military, you learn to expect the unexpected and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances," she added. "Those skills are invaluable, whether you're working in a combat zone or a civilian hospital."

Horton also shared that military nurses bring a unique perspective to their civilian colleagues and settings.

“We’ve seen it all,” she said. “From combat injuries to humanitarian missions, military nurses are exposed to a wide range of health care challenges that can inform and enrich their practice in civilian settings.”

Additionally, Horton has witnessed and experienced the importance of camaraderie and teamwork in both military and civilian nursing environments. “In the military, you rely on your teammates for support and solidarity,” she added. “That sense of camaraderie carries over into civilian nursing, where collaboration and mutual respect are essential for providing quality patient care.”

As Horton reflects on her dual identity as a military nurse and a civilian health care professional, she acknowledges the unique blend of skills and perspectives that define her role. “I carry the lessons of my military service with me wherever I go,” she said. “And I am grateful for the opportunity to continue serving others, whether in uniform or in scrubs.”

In her eyes, the connection between military nursing and civilian life runs deep and is rooted in a shared commitment to healing, compassion and service to others. “At the end of the day, it’s not about where you work or what uniform you wear, it’s about making a difference in the lives of those who need it most, wherever they may be,” she added.

Ultimately, Horton’s journey in the ANC is a testament to the transformative power of service, resilience and leadership. “I am who I am because of what I’ve gone through in the Army,” she said. “I am grateful for the experiences that have shaped me into the nurse and leader I am today.”

Horton’s advice to those considering a career in nursing or in the ANC is to embrace the opportunities for growth and development. “I tell them to really pause and make sure your heart is in it,” she said.



Omar Cardona, left, participates in the UT ROTC annual Combined Field Training exercise with Texas State University and St. Mary’s University.

Bridging the gap

School of Nursing Master’s student Omar Cardona, BSN ‘22, who is currently in the UT Army Nurse ROTC program, decided to pursue a career in the ANC thanks to support from faculty and mentors, including Horton.

She encouraged Cardona to align his heart with his professional path. Her guidance helped him navigate the complexities of joining the ROTC while pursuing graduate studies.

The ROTC and the School of Nursing sponsor the Partnership in Nursing Education Program, which allows nursing students to enroll in the Army ROTC program and receive a degree in nursing and a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the ANC.

“My goal is to ensure soldiers can focus on their duties, knowing their families are in capable hands.”

— Omar Cardona

“I knew I wanted to challenge myself and serve my country in a different capacity,” Cardona said. “The ANC offered an opportunity to not only care for soldiers but also their families, a responsibility I felt compelled to undertake.”

Cardona was initially drawn to marketing, and his path shifted when he reflected on his innate desire to help others, nurtured by caring for his mother who has epilepsy. “Growing up, I took on the role of caregiver for my mom,” he said. “It was those experiences that made me realize my calling to nursing. I saw firsthand the impact that compassionate care can have on a patient and their family.”

Recognizing the nurse-related tasks he performed for his mother, he realized that nursing aligned more closely with his identity and aspirations. Inspired by the care his mother received, he aims to replicate that sense of value for his future patients and their families.

For Cardona, the essence of nursing lies in the connections built with patients, bringing smiles, laughter and a sense of personhood to their care. While his role in the ROTC presents physical challenges and demands, he values the growth opportunities and tight-knit community it offers.

As he prepares to transition into his role as an Army nurse, Cardona remains committed to lifelong learning and growth. “I’m excited about the opportunities for professional development and advancement that the Army offers,” he said. “Whether it’s pursuing further education or gaining specialized training, I’m eager to continue honing my skills as a nurse and leader.” Cardona looks forward to bridging the gap between military and civilian health care. “My goal is to ensure soldiers can focus on their duties, knowing their families are in capable hands,” he added.

With aspirations to teach and make a difference in nursing education, Cardona sees himself guiding future generations of nurses. “I hope to inspire and empower students to become compassionate caregivers and advocates for their patients,” he said.

Cardona expresses gratitude for the support and guidance he’s received along the way. “I’m thankful for the mentors, professors and fellow students who have believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my dreams,” he concluded. “Their guidance has been invaluable, and I’m excited to continue growing and serving others in my future endeavors.”



‘The Wound Speaks’ School of Nursing Senior Brings Research on Barriers to Wound Care in Sub-Saharan Africa to a Global Stage



School of Nursing faculty encourage students to present their research and apply for conferences. As a nursing student, senior Arielle Warren has taken advantage of these opportunities and has presented her research locally and abroad.

Warren first presented her research “Global Health Education Through Binational Collaboration on Systematic Reviews of the Literature” at the UT Medical Branch’s Global Health Symposium in Galveston, Texas, in October 2023. She met and learned from global health experts and public health researchers and instantly understood the value of presenting research.

Additionally, Warren has presented her research at local conferences hosted by UT Austin, including an oral presentation titled “The Influence of Caregiver Knowledge of Childhood Asthma Management on Health Outcomes in Low-and-Middle Income Countries: A Systematic Review” at the Capital of Texas Undergraduate Research Conference in March 2024.

Her research “Multi-Modal Advancements in Wound Care using an Interdisciplinary, Binational Approach in Western Kenya” was accepted as a poster presenta-

tion for the Interprofessional Health Showcase in April 2024, receiving 2nd place in the Best in Health Innovation category.

Julie Zuñiga, PhD, RN, FAAN, associate professor, encouraged Warren to apply to present her findings at the Sigma Theta Tau 35th International Nursing Research Congress in Singapore in July 2024, funded by an Undergraduate Research Fellowship award. Warren gave an oral PechaKucha presentation, meaning chit-chat in Japanese, titled “Investigating Barriers and Facilitators to Wound Care in Sub-Saharan Africa,” as well as a poster presentation titled “Enhancing Global Health Education Through Binational Collaboration on Systematic Reviews of the Literature.”

The theme for this year’s Sigma conference was “Sharing Insights, Advancing Care: Disseminating Nursing Research and Evidence for the Future.” Warren said she was excited to learn from nurse researchers and fellow students from around the globe and learn more about the research process. She also saw this as an opportunity to improve her presentation and public speaking skills.

“It means a lot to me to have been able to travel to Singapore for this conference, and I am honored to have been accepted,”

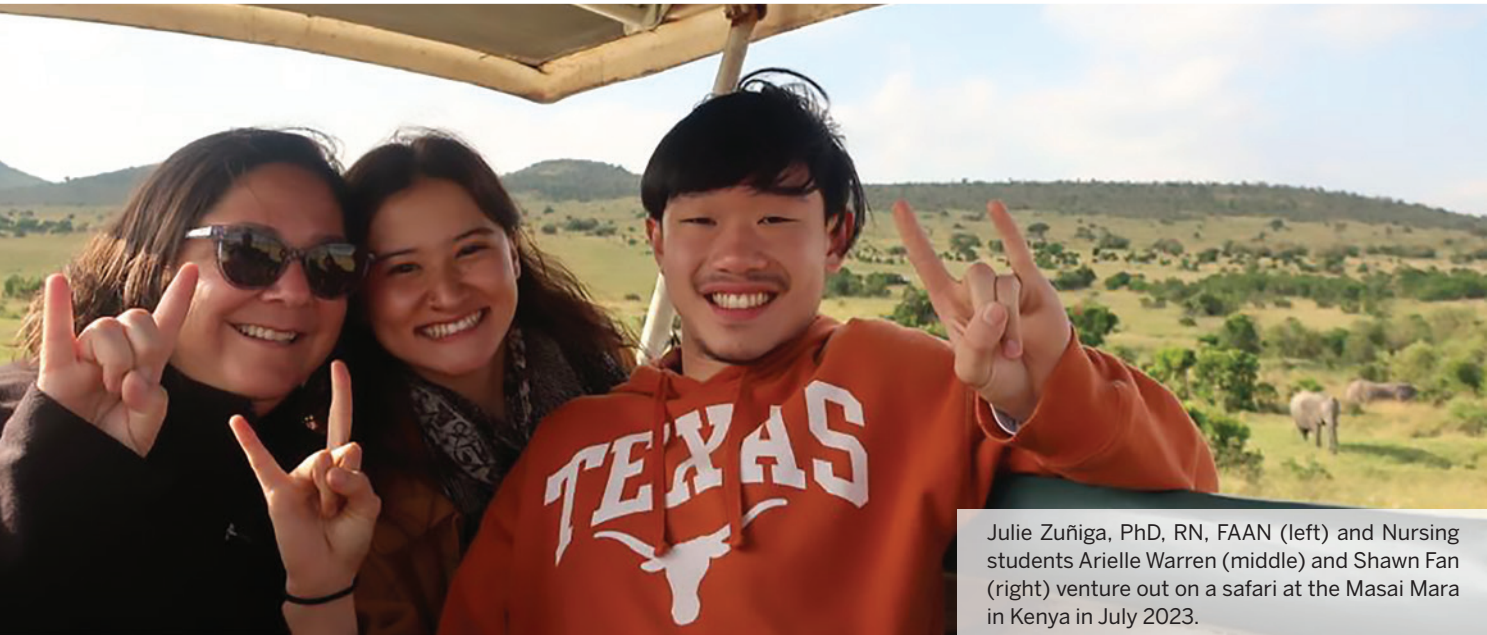
Warren said. “This is something I have been dreaming of for a long time, and I am very grateful for the School of Nursing’s support.”

Researching wound care and prevention

Warren’s research was originally developed through the UT President’s Award for Global Learning (PAGL) as part of the Wound Care in Kenya program.

In July 2023, a team of 14 undergraduate, interdisciplinary students from UT Austin traveled to Kenya for two weeks, where they started data collection. It was through this in-person opportunity that Warren was able to connect with students and faculty from Moi University in Kenya to begin her global health research. The first couple of meetings for the systematic reviews occurred in person in Kenya to establish the team and develop research questions.

Both of Warren’s studies are in collaboration with Moi University and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) based in Kenya, as part of the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare Consor-



Julie Zuñiga, PhD, RN, FAAN (left) and Nursing students Arielle Warren (middle) and Shawn Fan (right) venture out on a safari at the Masai Mara in Kenya in July 2023.

tium (AMPATH). Wounds were identified by the AMPATH partners as an urgent issue at MTRH.

The purpose of her research on wound care is to learn about current practices and wound care resources, as well as investigate how barriers affect how health care professionals and community members approach wound care in Sub-Saharan Africa to inform efforts to facilitate greater access to quality wound care.

The interdisciplinary team is made up of five undergraduate UT Austin students studying neuroscience, biology, mechanical engineering and liberal arts, and two nursing students and one medical student from Moi University, as well as two faculty mentors, one from each institution. They gathered data using online surveys, online interviews over Zoom and in-person interviews, asking 16 open-ended questions re-



Arielle Warren

garding barriers to wound care. This study was approved by UT Austin’s Institutional Review Board and Moi University’s Institutional Research Ethics Committee.

The data analysis process is ongoing. The team has gathered results from 28 participants and interviews. Early research suggests that wound care faces challenges like high supply costs, lack of protocols, inadequate staffing, knowledge deficits, antimicrobial resistance and mental health issues for providers.

Additionally, Warren said several of their participants mentioned the theme of “the wound speaks,” meaning the wound dictates the treatment plan as each patient and scenario is unique. Facilitators of wound care include a trusting patient-provider relationship, evidence-based practices, interdisciplinary collaboration, proper nutrition and hospital policies.

Collaborating for global health

Global health education encourages collaboration to promote research and innovation for international health challenges. For the binational collaboration study, the teams engaged in collaborative systematic reviews to train junior faculty, educate leaders and share global health information. These reviews addressed disease management and prevention in low-to-middle-income countries and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Warren said this research advances health science by utilizing the skills of junior colleagues and encourages global health concerns.

To date, Warren has had the opportunity to work on three literature reviews with this team, with two of them to be completed by fall 2024: “Influence of Heart Failure Knowledge on Self-Care Behaviors of Patients with Heart Failure in SSA—A Systematic Review” and “Influence of Caregiver Knowledge of Home Asthma Management on Health Outcomes of Children in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review.”

Additionally, the team is looking at how tactile-kinesthetic/massage therapy influences growth, development, neurological and physiological outcomes of preterm neonates through another systematic review of the literature.

Hope for global health

While presenting her research at the Sigma conference, Warren said her goal was to disseminate this work to fellow nurses to improve patient outcomes and bring awareness to the need for further wound care research and funding.

“I hope I was able to motivate more institutions to establish a reciprocal and sustainable global health relationship following the AMPATH model,” Warren added. “I also hope I was able to inspire fellow nursing students to get involved in research and understand its value.”

“The more research I involve myself in, the more rewarding it is,” she continued. “With each new study comes more opportunities to travel, to learn and to contribute even more. As students, it is important to take charge of our education and find what we are passionate about. I can take the data and knowledge that we have been collecting and apply it to my patients. By gaining a deeper understanding of evidence-based practices, I can apply them in the hospital,

which in turn, makes me a better student nurse.”

Warren expressed how grateful she is to Zuñiga, who serves as the faculty mentor for PAGL, for the countless opportunities to further her education by expanding her worldview and understanding of global health.

“I am so proud of Arielle’s work as a leader for a multidisciplinary binational team of undergraduate students,” Zuñiga said. “Her works highlight the incredible capabilities of our students. Above and beyond her own classwork and clinical work, Arielle wakes up very early to work with our Kenyan counterparts on several different projects. She has done amazing work and never backs down from a challenge. I’m so excited to see what the future holds for her in nursing.”

“Dr. Zuñiga serves as an embodiment of an excellent educator and mentor, and she is the reason I am now passionate about nursing research and global health,” Warren added.

Passion for health care

Warren’s passion for health care started when she was a little girl. While in high school, she had the opportunity to shadow and learn from nurse practitioners, which quickly solidified her love for nursing.

“Nursing is a calling as much as it is a profession, and it is one that I am proud to be a part of,” she said.

Through the variety of the School of Nursing’s clinical experiences, Warren said she had been able to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to real patients and loves how, in nursing, there are always more opportunities to learn.

“Being a Nursing student is a privilege, and I am very grateful for all the opportunities the School of Nursing has provided me,” she added.

As a nursing student, Warren said she has been able to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to real patients through the variety of the School’s clinical experiences.

“Health care is an ever-evolving field, and, with nursing research, we can contribute to the current existing knowledge to improve care for our patients,” she concluded. “Being able to help people for a living is extremely rewarding, and it is a constant reminder that it is a privilege to be able to do so. Every day is an opportunity to challenge myself and apply the nursing values of care and compassion for others outside of school and work.”



In Memoriam

Gayle Jane Acton, PhD, RN, CS



Dr. Gayle Acton

Gayle Jane Acton, PhD ’93, RN, CS, retired faculty and Texas Nursing alum, died on Oct. 16, 2023.

Acton dedicated 35 years of exceptional service to the

School of Nursing, beginning her illustrious career in 1986 as a clinical instructor and culminating in her role as assistant dean for graduate programs, which she held with distinction for over a decade until her retirement in 2022.

She was well-loved and deeply respected, touching the lives of hundreds of students, primarily in the School of Nursing’s graduate programs.

During her tenure, Acton guided more than 60 PhD students as chair or member of their doctoral dissertation committees.

Among her many contributions to the School was the creation of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program in 2014.

She worked closely with former Dean Alexa Stuijbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Jane Champion, PhD, DNP, MSN, MA, FNP, AH-PMH-CNS, FAAN, FAANP, Lee and Joseph P. Jamail Endowed Professorship, to develop the proposal for the DNP program, and she continued to teach in this program and mentor students until her retirement.

Acton’s research and scholarship focused on innovative approaches to assist family caregivers of persons with dementia. During her career, her research was funded by the American Nurses Foundation, Sigma Theta Tau, the National Institute of Nursing Research and the Veterans Administration.

She served the School of Nursing and UT Austin on numerous committees, including chair of the Interdisciplinary Portfolio Program in Gerontology (1998-2016) and as an appointed member of the Intercol-

legiate Council on Athletics (2018-2023). Acton received many professional honors for teaching and service, including the Luci Baines Johnson Fellowship in Nursing (1995-1998; 1999-2000). She was active in many community organizations promoting the health of older adults, including the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Meals on Wheels, Austin Groups for the Elderly and the Alzheimer’s Association of Central Texas.

“Gayle had a lasting impact on students, colleagues and programs at the School of Nursing, particularly in her long-term leadership and advocacy for older adults and gerontological nursing,” Stuijbergen said.

Faculty and alumni who sought to honor Acton’s memory collaborated with the School on the creation of the Gayle Acton Memorial Fellowships to support graduate students, a group that was especially near and dear to her heart as future nurse leaders.

In Memoriam

Miyong Kim, PhD, RN, FAAN



Dr. Miyong Kim

Miyong Kim, PhD, RN, FAAN, renowned nursing leader, researcher and highly esteemed professor at the School of Nursing, died June 10, 2024.

She joined the Texas Nursing faculty in 2013, and her innovative research in community health and self-care strategies, and her passion for reducing health disparities, left an indelible mark on the School and the broader field of nursing.

She was a translational researcher who built a strong program of research focused on community-based participatory research as a means of reducing cardiovascular-related health disparities among traditionally underserved ethnic minority populations.

Kim served in multiple leadership roles for the School of Nursing.

She was director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded P30

Center for Trans-Disciplinary Collaborative Research in Self-Management Science (2014-2021) to provide future nurse scientists with critical skills and knowledge to develop and implement innovative, effective, personalized interventions for populations suffering from multiple chronic conditions. In addition, she served as Program Director for the School of Nursing’s T32 Institutional Nursing Research Award (2020-2024) a predoctoral training program in Precision Health Intervention Methodology Training in Self-Management of Multiple Chronic Conditions.

She also directed the Center for Health Equity Research at the School of Nursing, serving as the principal investigator for multiple projects funded by the City of Austin, served as associate vice president of community health engagement at UT Austin and held the Maureen Healy Decherd ’73 Distinguished Professorship in Nursing.

Kim was also a prolific researcher with more than 40 externally funded in-

tervention studies, including six NIH-funded clinical trials and more than 175 publications in high-impact scientific journals.

She earned several prestigious honors, including fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing and in the American Heart Association. In 2012, she was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame.

Throughout her career, she was known not only for her achievements but also for her mentorship and support of early-career researchers.

She guided hundreds of students and junior faculty members, helping them grow professionally and personally. Many of her mentees subsequently established highly productive research careers in nursing.

“Dr. Kim’s leadership and impact at the local, national, and international levels have significantly strengthened the School of Nursing’s global position in nursing research,” said Dean Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN. “Her spirit and ability to inspire those around her were hallmarks of her service to Texas Nursing.”

MAKING THE LEAP:

Leigh Goldstein Leaves a Legacy on Nursing Education and Student Success

After 16 years with the School of Nursing, Leigh Goldstein, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, CNE, associate professor in clinical nursing and director of the Learning Enhancement and Academic Progress (LEAP) Center, departed in 2024, to be closer to family in Maryland.

In 2014, Goldstein, then a clinical assistant professor at the School of Nursing, was tasked by then-Dean Alexa Stuijbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN, James R. Dougherty

Jr. Centennial Professor, to launch the LEAP Center to strengthen academic resources and services for students and faculty at the School of Nursing.

The LEAP Center is designed to combine strategic areas within the School—such as the learning center, computer testing, simulation center, skills training, student academic support and media services—into a single cohesive unit that streamlines and optimizes the delivery of both student and faculty development.

“When I asked Leigh Goldstein to serve as the director of the LEAP Center in 2014, I knew she would bring her significant leadership and management experience, as well as her innovative mindset and enthusiasm to this new position,” Stuijbergen said.

“I charged her with redesigning the model of services while keeping a very close eye on student success outcomes and costs. She managed multiple renovation projects of the simulation and learning skills, greatly expanded the use of simulation in our clinical courses, achieved national and international recognition for the introduction of peer video performance exams and introduced many innovative programs, including the School serving as a training center for basic life support classes and the Longhorn Nursing summer camp for high school students.”

Innovative growth

Another program put in place by Goldstein has enhanced faculty education and support services, including implementing a grant program for various

teaching excellence certifications, such as the Certified Nurse Educator and Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator.

The center also provides support services for faculty to conduct educational research on their simulation and skills activities for conference and journal submissions.

In addition, the LEAP Center offers American Heart Association Basic Life Support (CPR), First Aid and AHA BLS Instructor Courses to UT Austin employees, students and community health care professionals who require certification for employment.

Goldstein received two nursing innovation grants, one as co-investigator in 2015, and one as primary investigator in 2017, totaling nearly \$350,000, funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to make improvements to the School of Nursing's simulation and skills center so the school could increase the use of clinical simulation.

The Simulation and Skills Center (SSC) is a state-of-the-art nursing educational facility that incorporates simulated, realistic learning experiences into

“I found out early on that I could take care of more patients through my students than I could by myself. I want the patients to get the best possible care.”

— Leigh Goldstein

the instruction of nursing students. SSC provides a safe learning environment for students to practice and demonstrate various nursing skills.

The learning environment improves students' psychomotor, physical assessment and critical thinking skills necessary for clinical performance. Students gain hands-on practice with the equipment and techniques they will need for the practice setting. SSC Lab Director Nicole Manley, MSN, RN, CA-SANE, educates faculty about simulation best practices.

Goldstein's final project for the SSC was implementing a virtual reality (VR) clinical simulation program. With the help of the SSC director, graduate students and faculty, the VR program grew from being implemented in two courses in Spring 2023 to eight courses in Spring 2024.

During their nursing program, students will complete over 40 hours of simulation, averaging three simulations weekly for clinical and skills courses and three skills classes weekly. Over 3,200 simulation hours are completed each semester.

The next chapter

Goldstein, who left the School of Nursing to be closer to family, accepted a tenure-track position at Towson University near Baltimore. She will be investigating different ways to use her video performance exam model to enhance students' transition to practice after graduation.

Reflecting, in April, on her time at the School of Nursing, Goldstein said, “I've been part of the nursing program in some capacity for 15 years. But I'm excited because I'm going to be close to my daughter. I will have the opportunity to conduct research and be more active in professional organizations in the D.C. area. I'm excited to be able to be part of my daughter's life, and I want to be there for her. But I will always be a Longhorn nurse and take all my memories with me.”

Move to video

Goldstein said her biggest accomplishment during her time at the School of Nursing was the LEAP Center, but as a teacher, her legacy is implementing an innovative model for summative testing, the video performance exams (VPE).

Goldstein describes the VPE as a fair way to help students learn essential high-risk nursing skills in a peer-to-peer envi-



Video performance exams.

ronment that fosters mastery of the skills while reducing performance stress.

The traditional way to test psychomotor nursing skills, such as starting IVs, is in person, where the student performs in front of a faculty member, getting two chances to pass or they would fail. Goldstein said some students are naturally gifted in their ability to complete tasks with their hands and some aren't, so requiring this type of summative exam didn't create a fair opportunity for all students.

This testing method risks students cramming, leading to difficulty replicating skills in practice. High anxiety and stress during tests hinder skill retention due to the fight-or-flight response.

The VPE is a peer-to-peer video performance exam where a pair of students take turns performing and grading. The students then switch roles. They then must grade their work to judge if it is worthy to submit.

They have multiple recording attempts over a designated period of time, which helps them master the skill. For example, the medication administration exam allows four weeks of opportunity to practice and test.

Students choose which performance to submit for grading, using various learning styles to suit their needs. This self-directed approach enhances their readiness for clinical practice.

“The students have a joint interest in each other's success,” Goldstein said. “And they're hooked together, so nobody passes until they both do. There's peer teaching, there's social learning and then

they must grade themselves before they submit their work. It's fair and students typically do great.”

According to Goldstein, the skills tested are areas hospitals focus on, such as sterility, infection prevention and safe medication administration. Focusing on these skills in school is important so students enter the hospitals knowing how to perform them correctly.

In 2015, Goldstein received a \$50,000 grant, funded by the UT Center for Teaching and Learning, for her program “Nursing Student Skill Mastery using Video, Peer Teaching and Constructive Critique,” which was fully implemented in 2016.

Goldstein was invited to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology Norway to be the keynote speaker at a conference to present the VPE exams to help them implement a version of video performance exams in their anesthesia program.

Five professors from the Norwegian school also visited the School of Nursing to explore the VPE process and tour the Simulation and Skills Lab before Goldstein's visit. This summer, she visited King's College London to see her video performance exams in action by a faculty member Goldstein mentored, who recently completed her master's degree.

Reflections on the journey

Over the years, Goldstein has seen several of her former students become nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, researchers and fellow faculty. She says



Dr. Goldstein assists a Longhorn Nursing Immersion Summer Camp student to start an intravenous catheter on a manikin.

she feels fortunate to have been part of their professional growth and watch the careers of former students who had a strong foundational education and took it to the next level.

Goldstein said she hopes the students she's taught over the years remember her dedication to their learning and success and the School of Nursing faculty feel like she supported their teaching and helped them secure the tools to teach and to teach more effectively.

"I love the students, and I am passionate about nursing," Goldstein said. "I think that is my goal. I found out early on that I could take care of more patients through my students than I could by myself. I want the patients to get the best possible care. The program at the School of Nursing is rigorous, and the students receive a well-rounded education and practical experience that sets them up for professional success."

Her best memories from the School of Nursing are all from her students, she says. Goldstein's favorites include those who came to the School from underserved, underrepresented areas. She watched these students work full-time, in addition to being full-time students, work hard to be at the School and sometimes

not have enough money to eat or pay rent.

Goldstein said it was an honor to see these students work hard and graduate knowing they trusted her to help them get there.

"I've always talked about nursing school as a journey, and we start a jour-

ney by putting two feet on the ground and moving forward," Goldstein said. "And I think that wherever you want to go, the best way to go is just to start the journey, and then, as you reach your goals, you can branch off and create new ones to continue your journey." 🐾



Dr. Goldstein poses with LEAP Center student workers.

Donor Spotlight

GIVING BACK: Jim Connell Supports Next Generation of Nurses



Jim Connell
BA '65, JD '69



Tiffany Pham
BSN '23

December 2023 School of Nursing graduate Tiffany Pham never thought she'd complete college. Her family immigrated from Vietnam, and she was born and raised in Amarillo, Texas, where she had to grow up at a young age to help her mother navigate her new life in the U.S.

"We were poor, but rich, in a sense, that my mother valued the importance of education and ensured everything in her power that I finish college," Pham said.

Pham said she remembers attending orientation at UT Austin and stressing about how she was going to afford her education. Shortly after orientation, to her surprise, she found out she received the Randy Clay Burgess University Leadership Network Endowed Scholarship. This award is granted to first-generation students who reside in Amarillo.

“I would like to become like Jim one day, I want to give back to those who want to pursue higher education, but their circumstances don't allow them to. I plan on pursuing a doctorate in the future, so I hope I can make that a goal just like Jim did.”

— Tiffany Pham

Having this financial support was life-changing.

"Receiving this scholarship truly helped me even afford my basic needs during my time at UT Austin," she added. "I am truly grateful that there are people who wish to help students like me."

When Pham came to UT Austin, she was still exploring majors and determining which one was best for her. As an internal transfer, she chose nursing because she was determined to find a fulfilling major and something she could see herself doing long-term—one that keeps her on her toes and learning something new every day.

Since graduating, she has used her skills and passion to work in patient care.

"I am currently an Intensive Care Unit nurse, and I don't regret anything that has brought me up to this point today," she added, "but it definitely wouldn't have happened if the Randy Clay Burgess University Leadership Network Endowed Scholarship didn't choose me as one of their recipients. I didn't have to worry about the hardships I could have faced and only focused on school. I am very grateful."

UT Austin alumnus Jim Connell, BA '65, JD '69, and his brother John Connell, BA '65, JD '69, established the Randy Clay Burgess University Leadership Network Endowed Scholarship in 2017, in

memory of their friend Randy Clay Burgess, who earned a Bachelor of Journalism in 1975, thereby assuring Randy's legacy.

Future generations of students in the Amarillo area will, in his name, have an opportunity to change their lives and change the world. The scholarship supports the University Leadership Network (ULN) and is designed for first-generation students who reside in Amarillo.

The ULN is a nationally recognized incentive-based scholarship program for students with demonstrated financial need. Each year, 500 freshmen are selected to begin the program. ULN includes a comprehensive four-year plan that involves leadership training, experiential learning opportunities and university service. The ULN program helps students to develop academic and leadership skills consistent with graduating in four years.

The rising cost of higher education has become a concern for Jim Connell, and he wishes to help as many students as possible achieve their educational goals with less student debt.

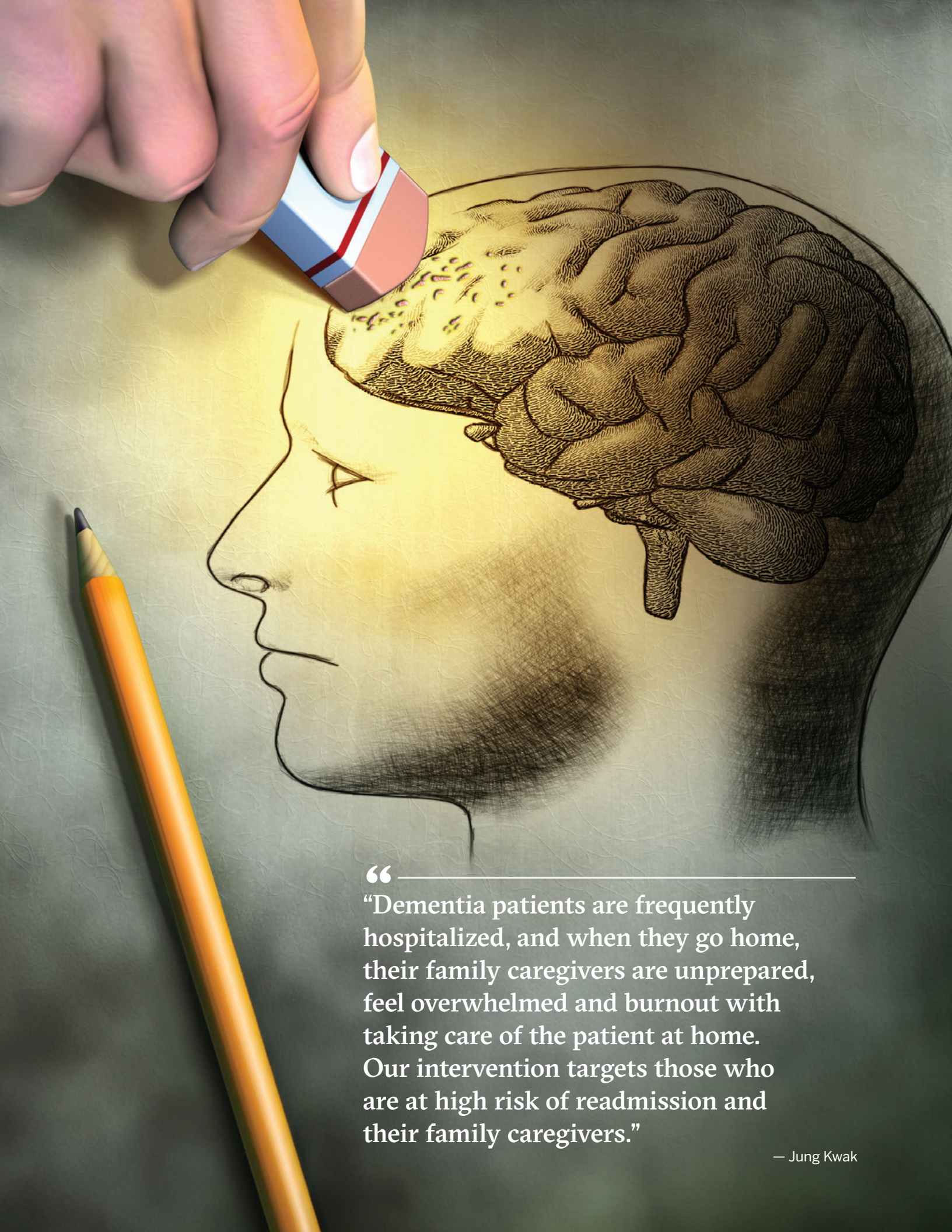
To help make this possible for nursing students, Connell also established the Burgess and Connell Families Scholarship, which honors James and Elnora Connell—his parents—and Jack and Billee Burgess—Randy's parents—whose support and encouragement enabled their sons to graduate from UT Austin. It is also endowed in honor of all those whose financial support makes the dream of a college education a reality for others. The scholarship supports the Texas Advance Commitment, a scholarship program for high-potential students from low- and middle-income families endowed by the Board of Regents of UT Austin.

"It means a great deal to me to help, in a small way, the next generation of nurses prepare for successful careers," Connell said. "I am grateful for the education I received at UT Austin and am pleased that I can give back by helping deserving students graduate from one of the nation's top public research universities and change the world for the better."

Connell became interested in the School of Nursing when Pham received the Randy Clay Burgess University Leadership Network Endowed Scholarship. Connell said Pham's resourcefulness, perseverance and determination played a large role in his decision to establish a scholarship for nursing students. Scholarships enabled Pham to pursue her dream of a college education with little or no student loan debt.

In addition, Connell believes COVID-19 is a reminder that the health care system cannot function without skilled nurses. He's proud to support the School of Nursing as it's well positioned to meet the critical need for highly skilled nurses, including those who will staff the two new hospitals—UT MD Anderson Cancer Center Hospital and UT Austin Hospital—which will be located close to the School.

"I would like to become like Jim one day," Pham said. "I want to give back to those who want to pursue higher education, but their circumstances don't allow them to. I plan on pursuing a doctorate in the future, so I hope I can make that a goal just like Jim did." 🐾



“Dementia patients are frequently hospitalized, and when they go home, their family caregivers are unprepared, feel overwhelmed and burnout with taking care of the patient at home. Our intervention targets those who are at high risk of readmission and their family caregivers.”

— Jung Kwak

FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME

Jung Kwak Leads Research Efforts to Help Persons Living with Dementia and Family Caregivers During Hospital Transitions

More than 55 million people have dementia worldwide with nearly 10 million new cases every year, according to the World Health Organization. Dementia is currently the seventh leading cause of death and one of the major causes of disability and dependency among the elderly globally.

School of Nursing Associate Professor Jung Kwak, PhD, MSW, FGSA, wants to help persons living with dementia (PLWD) and their caregivers during hospital transitions.

“Dementia patients are frequently hospitalized, and when they go home, their family caregivers are unprepared, feel overwhelmed and burnout with taking care of the patient at home,” Kwak said. “Our intervention targets those who are at high risk of readmission and their family caregivers.”

Dementia is a term used for several diseases that affect memory, thinking and the ability to perform daily activities. The illness gets worse over time and mainly affects older people but not all people will get it as they age. Dementia is a syndrome that can be caused by several diseases that, over time, destroy nerve cells and damage the brain, typically leading to deterioration in cognitive function beyond what might be expected from the usual consequences of biological aging. While consciousness is not affected, the impairment in cognitive function is commonly accompanied, and occasionally preceded, by changes in mood, emotional control, behavior or motivation.

Kwak has always loved working with and being around older adults, as it was part of her cultural and family upbringing. Her family was deeply affected when both of her maternal grandparents and her paternal grandmother were diagnosed with dementia.

“For my paternal grandfather, as well



Jung Kwak
PhD, MSW, FGSA

as my maternal grandmother, my mother was the main caregiver,” Kwak said. “She had a full-time job, and while my father was a dedicated son and was involved, it really came down to my mom to make a lot of practical and complex health care decisions. She was also more involved with the drug caregiving than anyone else in the family. And I think seeing my mother provide care to my grandparents helped me to appreciate how much love and sacrifice is involved in providing care for persons living with dementia.”

When her mother was a caregiver, there wasn’t much awareness of dementia, let alone supportive services for caregivers. Kwak would observe and admire her mom for the way she cared for her grandparents. As one of the important role models in her life, she said watching her mother care for them made her realize how important it is to provide and develop better support systems not only for those living with dementia but also for the family caregivers.

This experience with her family was what made Kwak interested in dementia caregiving.

“I am a gerontologist, and my research has always focused on dementia patients and their family caregivers, especially as the disease progresses into

DATA ON DEMENTIA

6.9 million
persons living with
dementia in the U.S.

11+ million
family caregivers
providing support

Almost
3X the
Medicare expenditures

1/3
of all Medicare beneficiaries
who die in a given year
have been diagnosed with
Alzheimer’s or another
dementia.

Source: Alzheimer’s Association, 2024
Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures

a more advanced stage,” Kwak said. “Dementia is becoming a very important health condition and issue that affects millions of people.”

Kwak said hospitalization for persons living with dementia should be avoided as much as possible. During the care transition process, oftentimes, there is a significant gap in terms of information needs, education and coaching for patients, as well as family caregivers.

“We do know that care transition is a really important part of the health care experience,” she added. “But many transition programs have not been designed with the input of dementia patients, family caregivers and stakeholders. My project aims to fill that gap by designing an intervention that is meaningful and helpful to the patients and family caregivers and can be implemented and sustainable in a complex health care system.”

Kwak’s primary research project is to co-design, implement and test a hospital-based community health worker-led care transition support for PLWDs and care partners with stakeholders, including PLWDs, caregivers and health care system partners at Dell Seton Medical Center, Ascension Seton Medical Center and community partners.



“We need to develop innovative cost-effective services and programs to address the complexities of these patients and families coming from very diverse backgrounds. I feel honored to be part of that effort.”

— Jung Kwak

To conduct her research, Kwak received a variety of funding, totaling nearly \$300,000, from the Cain Collaborative Research Pilot Grant, St. David’s CHPR Pilot Study Grant and The National Institutes on Aging IMPACT Collaboratory for the Health Care Systems Scholars Award. She also received a philanthropic gift to the School of Nursing from Sheri Clark Henriksen, BS ’84, TOWER Fellow ’23.

“I chose to support dementia and dementia caregiver research at the School of Nursing because my father is now suffering from dementia,” Henriksen said. “Contributing to Dr. Kwak’s work is important to me because her study is so important to the caregivers in our communities. Her study can identify the challenges in our system and aid the caregivers, who need to be informed on the best options to help their newly diagnosed family members. Taking care of a family member with dementia can be one of the most challenging times in a family’s life. Both the caregiver and the patient need the most relevant resources a community can offer.”

Two years ago, Kwak’s work “Culture, Faith and Trust in Dementia Surrogate Decision-Making,” funded by The Sojourns Scholar Leadership Program, was the building block for her current project, which provided a needs assessment with hospitalized dementia patients and their family caregivers.

This research is a collaborative effort with Sarah Mills, MD, and Mike Brode, MD, from Dell Medical School; Elizabeth Kvale, MD, from Baylor College of Medicine; and Snehal Patel, MD from Central Health, formerly at Dell Medical School.

Together, they are testing and developing the hospital-based community health worker-led care transition support from the bottom up, manually creating the intervention process training materials, as well as administering a pilot test at one of the

health care system partner sites.

The project goal is to implement and test a hospital-based community health worker-led care transition support for PLWDs and care partners. Community health workers are trusted allies of the community. They can effectively bridge cultural gaps between vulnerable patients, family caregivers and the health care system to address their needs holistically. They can provide simple, straightforward advice, information and individualized support for family caregivers, fostering their self-efficacy and resilience. Essentially, they are patient advocates, connectors, navigators and coaches.

The intervention is delivered by a community health worker who will educate, coach family caregivers and provide care navigation support, starting from the time patients are hospitalized and continuing the support after they are discharged from the hospital.

Overall, they want to improve the quality of life for both the persons living with dementia and their family caregivers and design the process to integrate into the health care system, so it can be adopted, implemented and sustained in various settings. The long-term goal of this research is to design a safe and effective transition support that is acceptable for various stakeholders.

“It is such a privilege to listen to, work with and learn from the patients and the families,” she added. “It is also a privilege to work with clinicians and care staff including social workers, case managers and health care system vendors at these two hospitals.”

“We need to develop innovative cost-effective services and programs to address the complexities of these patients and families coming from very diverse backgrounds. I feel honored to be part of that effort.”



CARING FOR KIDS:

Carolyn R. and Gary L. Mueller Establish Planned Gift in Pediatric Nursing

During her time as a NICU nurse, Carolyn R. Mueller, PhD, RN, made it her mission to help worried parents connect with their delicate newborns through a loving touch or warm embrace.

“My goal was always to support the family in whatever future they have,” she said. “That’s what pediatric nurses do.”

Carolyn knows it takes a combination of education and experience to rise to the level of expertise needed to treat pediatric patients. That’s why she and her husband, Gary L. Mueller, M.D., established a planned gift that will create an endowed professorship at the School of Nursing to further clinical pediatric nursing education at the PhD level.

The Muellers are long-time supporters of the School of Nursing, but this is only the latest of Carolyn’s many roles for Texas Nursing.

“Pediatric nurses have expertise in navigating the many discussions and decisions needed to care for a child. There is no doubt that the children of the State of Texas need to have educated nurses managing their care.”

— Carolyn Mueller

She’s a Texas Nursing alumna after earning her PhD in Nursing in 1997—a transformational experience that enabled her to conduct research on the nursing care of children and families. One of her proudest UT Austin memories was seeing her dissertation bound and added to the body of research housed at the Perry-Castañeda Library on campus.

Carolyn said the ability to focus on her research and not have to work full-time during her PhD program was one of the biggest blessings she could have received and was the inspiration behind the creation of their estate gift, which will ultimately create an endowed professorship in pediatric nursing.

“The whole PhD program was more than I could imagine,” she said. “We want to provide these kinds of opportunities for other nurses and enable more nurses to gain graduate-level knowledge about pediatric nursing.”

They believe graduate-level education can change perspectives and lives, especially for nurses.



Gary L. Mueller, M.D., and Carolyn R. Mueller, PhD '97, RN

“You’re not going to come out the same way you went in,” Gary said. “You’re going to come out different.”

After earning her PhD, Carolyn accepted a faculty position at the School of Nursing teaching child/family nursing. She also served as co-chair of the Division of Family, Public Health and Nursing Systems and ultimately retired in 2016 as assistant professor of clinical nursing.

Now, she and Gary want to provide more opportunities for clinical pediatric nursing education at the PhD level.

“We both value education tremendously, so who best to give back to than those who nurtured you?” Carolyn said.

The Muellers are strong believers in supporting the local health care community in particular by providing pathways for advancing research into the needs of children and families in Austin.

“Children are not just little adults,” Gary said. “It’s immensely beneficial to have a knowledge set from a pediatric perspective, and we need the contributions of PhD-prepared academic researchers.”

Carolyn said the complexities of pediatric nursing are what she enjoys most because of the challenges they present.

“Pediatric nurses have expertise in navigating the many discussions and decisions needed to care for a child,” she said. “There is no doubt that the children of the State of Texas need to have educated nurses managing their care.”



WHAT STARTS HERE

STARTS WITH YOU



The School of Nursing is on the rise—in so many ways.

When UT Austin launched the What Starts Here 10-year fundraising campaign in 2016, the School of Nursing's goal was \$50 million.

Thanks to our incredibly generous supporters, we've surpassed that goal and are continuing to build on that momentum by increasing the campaign goal to \$60 million.

"We are immensely grateful for our supporters who know the value of investing in future health care and nurse leaders," said Eun-Ok Im, dean of the School of Nursing. "Sustained philanthropy empowers us to adapt to new landscapes and to provide continuity for those served by the School of Nursing."

Your support ensures Texas Nursing students have access to the latest equipment and teaching methods. That faculty can engage in research relevant to the Austin community and across continents. And that our nurse-managed clinics can provide life-sustaining care to children and families.

Our campaign priorities continue to be guideposts as we reach toward the new goal:

Educate Tomorrow's Health Care Leaders

As the flagship nursing school of Texas, the School of Nursing prepares the next generation of exceptional, skilled, compassionate nurses who will lead person-centered care and create change in health care. By investing in these outstanding students, you can help recruit and educate future leaders on the front lines of health care.

Recruit and Support Outstanding Faculty

Whether in the classroom, the simulation laboratory, the community or the clinic, the School of Nursing faculty are continually breaking new ground through

their scholarship, service and teaching. To ensure the School of Nursing continues to lead, we need your help to invest in recruitment and retention packages for excellent teachers and researchers.

Lead Person-Centered, Value-Based Care

Nurses represent the largest health profession in the U.S., with over 4 million professionals in the workforce. Nurses have a unique opportunity to create the person-centered, value-based health care delivery that will change the world, and your investment will take advantage of their unique opportunities to change health for the better.

Reimagine Community-Based Health

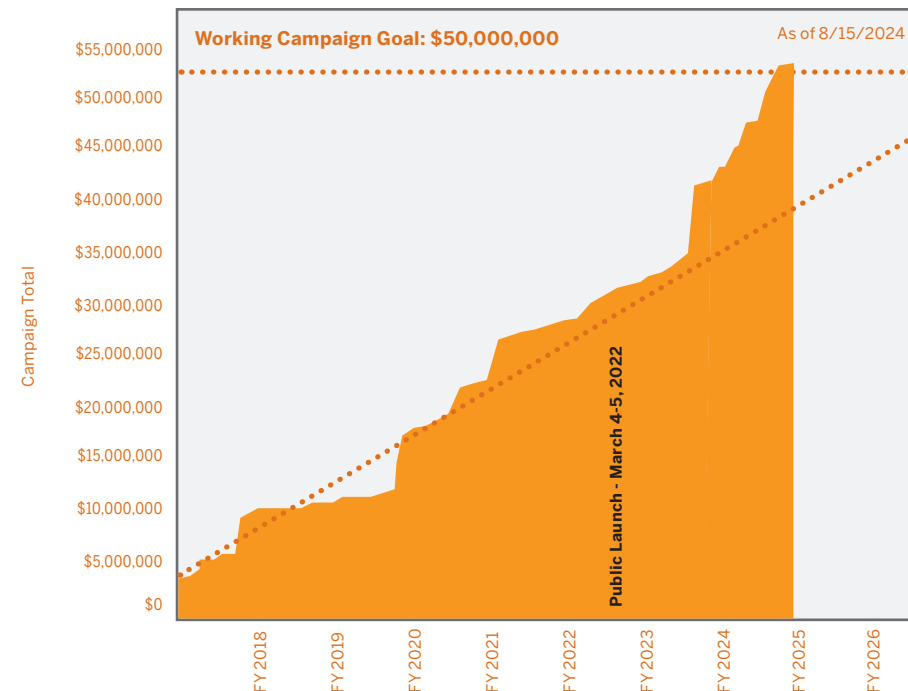
Our nation desperately needs an innovative, coordinated system of care for older adults, and both UT and the School of Nursing are uniquely positioned to lead the development of health-focused, community-rooted solutions that give elders and their families the tools to remain healthy and in their communities throughout their lives.

Just as health care is an ongoing process that responds to our bodies and environments, we are responding, too.

Your gift to the School of Nursing is an investment in a healthy future for us all.

Support the School of Nursing
Contact Chief Development Officer
Sergio Delgado
sdelgado@nursing.utexas.edu
512-694-8751

Cumulative Campaign Progress



Longhorn Nursing News

Faculty

Chris Abbyad, PhD, RN, WHNP, clinical associate professor, was awarded a prestigious position as a fellow for the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses.

Teresa Bailey, DNP '19, APRN, NNP-BC, CNE, clinical assistant professor, and **Katie Sanders**, DNP, RN, CNE, clinical assistant professor, were recently awarded a Nursing Innovation Grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that will support the growth of the Teaching in Nursing Post-Masters certificate program.

Heather Cuevas, PhD '13, MSN '03, RN, ACNS-BC, FCNS, assistant professor, was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. She also presented her research "Associations of Glucose Variability, Cognitive Function and Diabetes Self-Management Latino Adults With Type 2 Diabetes" at the Sigma Theta Tau Conference in Singapore in July 2024.

Gabrielle Davis, DNP, MSN-Ed, APRN, PMHNP-BC, CNE, joined the faculty as clinical assistant professor.

Jennifer Flippo, DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, PMHS, CNEcl, clinical assistant professor, received the Dean's Excellence Award in Service.

Alexandra García, PhD '02, RN, FAAN, was appointed as the inaugural Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Shaoqing Ge, PhD, RN, MPH, assistant professor, received a Health IT Speedy Proposal Assistance and Research Knowledge Grant for her research project titled, "Understanding the Challenges of and Prototyping an AI Chatbot Intervention for Dementia Caregivers with Hearing or Vision Impairment."

Megan Hebdon, PhD, DNP, RN, NP-c, former assistant professor, and **Heather Cuevas**, PhD '13, MSN '03, RN, ACNS-BC, FCNS, assistant professor, received a Health IT Speedy Proposal Assistance and Research Knowledge Grant for their research project titled, "Technology for Wellness and Weight Loss: An Integrative Approach."

Elizabeth Heitkemper, PhD, RN, assistant professor, and **Whitney Thurman**, PhD, RN, assistant professor, along with their community team, received a Social Innovations Research & Evaluation Network (SIREN) Engagement Grant for their research project "Co-Creating a Social Care Research Agenda for Action on Homelessness."

Ashley Henneghan, PhD '17, MSN '14, RN, FAAN, was promoted to associate professor with tenure. She also received the Dean's Excellence Award in Research.

Janice Hernandez, DNP '17, MSN '09, BSN '04, RN, FNP-C, was promoted to clinical associate professor. She also received the Faculty Development Award for the 2024-25 review cycle.

Amy Holland, MSN '07, BSN '76, RN, CNE, clinical instructor, and **Katie Sanders**, DNP, RN, CNE, clinical assistant professor, were inducted into the Center for Health Interprofessional Practice and Education 2024 cohort of Health IPE Fellows in March 2024.

Shelli Kesler, PhD, Dr. Mary Louise Adams Endowed Professor in Oncology Nursing, was named the director of the Center for Advanced Research Methods. She also became a member of Sigma Xi, a highly respected scientific research honor society.

Stephanie Key, DNP, MSN '99, APRN, CPNP-PC, clinical assistant professor, received a Center for Teaching and Learning's 2024-25 Teaching Innovation Grant.

Jung Kwak, PhD, MSW, FGSA, associate professor, received the NIA IMPACT Collaboratory HCS Scholars Award for her project on care transition support for dementia patients. Along with Alys-sa Aguirre from Dell Medical School, she received a grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services in June 2024. She was also named a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice in Social Work in December 2023 and inducted in March 2024.

Yang Li, PhD, RN, assistant professor, received the Dean's Excellence Award in Scholarship.

Li-Chen Lin, PhD '09, RN, CNRN, clinical assistant professor, received a Health IT Speedy Proposal Assistance Grant for her project on game-based learning to improve medication management for those with limited English proficiency. She was also a finalist for the 2024 MRC Mentor Award and presented her research on Korean American midlife women with depressive symptoms at the Sigma Theta Tau Conference in Singapore in July 2024.

Nicole Murry, PhD '18, BSN '02, RN, was promoted to clinical associate professor and named director for the Center for Professional Development and Scholarship.

Eugene Martir, MSN, RN, joined the faculty as clinical instructor.

Nico Osier, PhD, BSN, BS, RN, clinical assistant professor, was named one of Texas Nurses Association's Outstanding 25 Texas Nurses for 2024. They were recognized at the UT System's Kenneth I. Shine MD Academy of Health Science Education Innovation Meeting on Feb. 23, 2024. Osier and their students won the People's Choice poster award for their project on research mentorship and were finalists in the Best in Literature Review category at the 6th Annual Interprofessional Health Showcase for their work on gene editing delivery systems for glioblastoma multiforme.

Yaolin Pei, PhD, joined the faculty as research assistant professor.

Carolyn Phillips, PhD '19, RN, AOCNP, and **Whitney Thurman**, PhD '18, MSN '07, RN, as well as their community partner **Emily Seales**, LCSW-S, received a grant through the UT Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work's Moritz Center for Societal Impact's Good Neighbors Program.

Kavita Radhakrishnan, PhD, MSEE, RN, FAAN, FAHA, was named the new Associate Dean for Research as of June 1, 2024.

Lynn Rew, EdD, RN, AHN-BC, FAAN, Denton & Louise Cooley and Family Centennial Professor, was named a Highly Ranked Scholar by ScholarGPS. She is ranked as #3 in pediatric nursing and is in the top 0.05 percent of all scholars for her lifetime of contributions to nursing.

Elesha Roberts, PhD, RN, CNEcl, CNE, CHSE, clinical assistant professor, received the Dean’s Excellence Award in Research and the School of Nursing’s Innovation in Teaching Award. She was recognized at the UT System’s Kenneth I. Shine MD Academy of Health Science Education Innovation Meeting on Feb. 23, 2024, and earned an honorable mention for her poster project, “The Art of Nursing Used to Enhance Therapeutic Communication.”

Susie Seay, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC, joined the faculty as clinical instructor.

Amber Sherman, DNP ‘23, MSN ‘16, BSN ‘13, RN, clinical assistant professor, completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice at the School of Nursing.

Gayle Timmerman, PhD, APRN-CNS, FNAP, FAAN, senior associate dean for academic affairs and professor, was named one of Texas Nurses Association’s Outstanding 25 Texas Nurses for 2024.

Lorraine Walker, EdD, RN, MPH, Luci B. Johnson Centennial Professor, received the Dean’s Excellence Award in Service, and she was named co-director for the Center for Professional Development and Scholarship..

Verónica García Walker, PhD ‘14, MSN ‘84, BSN ‘82, RN, CNE, Ed and Molly Smith Centennial Fellow in Nursing, received the Dean’s Excellence Award in Scholarship.

Jennifer Williams, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN, joined the faculty as clinical instructor.

Bo Xie, PhD, FGSA, professor, was named the inaugural director of the Center for Healthcare Innovation and Technology Advancements.

Linda H. Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN, retired in August 2024, after serving nearly 17 years at the School of Nursing and received emeritus status.

Cara Young, PhD, RN, FNP-C, FAANP, FAAN, associate professor; **Lynn Rew**, EdD, RN, AHN-BC, FAAN, Denton & Louise Cooley and Family Centennial Professor; **Bora Kim**, PhD ‘23, postdoctoral researcher; and **Nani Kim**, PhD student, received Best in Literature Review at the 6th Annual Interprofessional Health Showcase for their work titled, “LR-01 Comparison of Help-Seeking Behaviors in Adolescents and Young Adults with Nonsuicidal Self-Injury: An Integrative Review.” Young was also named the new PhD program director.

Lea Zemmour, MSN ‘23, APRN, PMHNP-BC, joined the faculty as clinical instructor.

Julie Zuñiga, PhD ‘13, MSN ‘06, RN, associate professor, was named the interim director of the Center for Global Nursing and Health and received the Dean’s Excellence Award in Global & Community Nursing. She also received the 2024 Dean’s Research Stimulus Pilot Award for the research proposal “Intervention Development to Address Social Determinants of Health Risk for Diabetes in the Hispanic Community: A Pilot Study Using Constant Glucose Monitors.”

Alumni

Adem Cengiz, PhD ‘22, MSN, RN, and Linda Yoder, PhD, MBA, RN, AOCN, FAAN, emeritus professor, received an award from the Association of Perioperative Nurses for their paper “Perioperative Nurses’ Perceptions of the QSEN Competencies.”

Kelsey Evans, MSN ‘24, BSN ‘13, received The University of Texas MD Anderson Post Graduate Fellowship in Oncology Nursing.

Florence Fadipe, BSN ‘24, received the Texas Parent Outstanding Student Award.

Jennie Joyner, DNP ‘24, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC, presented her research “Social Determinants of Health Affecting Healthcare Cost in Near-Term Infants: Analysis from a National Cohort” at the Pediatric Academic Societies in Toronto, Canada, in May 2024.

Morgan Mull, MSN ‘24, RN, received the Keith Haring NP Postgraduate Fellowship In LGBTQ+ Health.

Stephanie Woods, PhD ‘94, was named dean of the Texas Woman’s University College of Nursing.

Laurie Kennedy-Malone, received the School of Nursing’s 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award



Laurie Kennedy-Malone

Laurie Kennedy-Malone, PhD, GNP-BC, FAANP, FAGHE, FGSA, FAAN, was named the 2024 distinguished alumna for the School of Nursing, where she earned her PhD in 1990. With a career dedicated to the advancement of gerontological nursing, Kennedy-Malone has made significant contributions to both academia and clinical practice.

Kennedy-Malone serves as a professor of nursing at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), where she specializes in educating future nurse practitioners, particularly in gerontology. Her research focuses on improving health care outcomes for older adults through innovative teaching strategies, interprofessional collaboration and evidence-based practice.

In addition to her academic role, Kennedy-Malone is a prolific author, having published numerous articles and textbooks on geriatric nursing. Her dedication to nursing is also exemplified by her involvement in professional organizations, such as the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

Kennedy-Malone’s commitment to excellence in nursing education and her advocacy for the aging population have earned her numerous accolades and recognition from her peers. She has been a certified gerontological nurse practitioner for over 25 years. She received her BSN in nursing and sociology from Worcester State College and her master’s as a gerontological nurse practitioner from The University of Lowell.

Janiece L. Taylor received the School of Nursing’s 2024 Rising Star Alumni Award



Janiece L. Taylor

Janiece L. Taylor, PhD, MSN, RN, FAAN, received the 2024 Rising Star Alumni Award and is an esteemed alumna of the School of Nursing, where she earned her master’s in 2009 and PhD in 2014. Currently, she serves as an assistant professor on the research/education track at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, making significant

contributions to the field through her innovative research and dedicated teaching.

Taylor’s research focuses on identifying and addressing disparities in pain among older women from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. She is also committed to improving the quality of life and health outcomes for individuals aging with disabilities.

She completed an Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Fellowship in Biobehavioral Pain Research at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She was also selected as the first nurse in the Robert Wood Johnson Harold Amos Fellowship Program.

In her leadership roles, Taylor serves as the co-associate director of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing RESILIENCE Center and as principal faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Center for Innovative Care in Aging. Her impactful work has received support from various prestigious organizations, including the John A. Hartford Foundation, National Institute of Nursing Research, Mayday Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Harold Amos Medical Faculty Program.

Students

Arielle Warren, BSN student, was awarded an Undergraduate Research Fellowship to present her research at the Sigma Theta Tau Conference in Singapore in July 2024. Her research teams also received 2nd place in the Best in Health Innovation category at the 6th Annual Interprofessional Health Showcase. Their research presentation was titled “H-13 Multi-Modal Advancements in Wound Care Using an Interdisciplinary, Binational Approach in Western Kenya.”

Oscar Franco Rocha, BSN, RN, PhD in Nursing Candidate, received a Health Equity Fellowship from the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer.

Staff

Tristan d’Artagnan, administrative associate, received the SON Star Award on Jan. 1, 2024.

Ruperta Chavez, senior office assistant, received the SON Star Award on Sept. 1, 2023.

Jane Denson, finance manager, received a Staff Service Award for 40 years of service to UT Austin.

Tracy Demchuk, EdD, senior director for graduate program advising and admissions, received the UT Austin Graduate School’s Outstanding Graduate Coordinator award. She was also named one of Austin’s 2024 Extraordinary Women by the Austin American-Statesman.

Janet Ehle, manager of graphic services, received a Staff Service Award for 10 years of service to UT Austin.

Michelle Lemaster, director for undergraduate advising & admissions, received a Staff Service Award for 25 years of service to UT Austin.

Kimberly Lewis, PhD ‘20, MSN ‘12, RN, CGNC, research professional, presented her research “Social Determinants of Health Affecting Hospital Readmissions for Older Adults With Type 2 Diabetes” at the Sigma Theta Tau Conference in Singapore in July 2024.

Nicole Manley, MSN ‘22, RN, CHSE, CA-SANE, was named interim director of the Learning Enhancement and Academic Progress Center. She also passed the Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator exam in May 2024.

Rachel Whitefield, administrative associate, received a Staff Service Award for 20 years of service to UT Austin.

Mary Winter, MSN, RN, a member of the Program Evaluation Team, received the SON Star Award in August 2024.

Jesus Ybarra, community health worker at the Children’s Wellness Center, received the SON Star Award on May 1, 2024.

The School of Nursing welcomes new communications director



Jaime Lee

School of Nursing welcomes **Jaime Lee** as the School’s first director of communications. In this new role, Lee leads the implementation of the School’s strategic communications and marketing initiatives.

She previously worked on the executive communications team for the American Heart Association, crafting a digital communications strategy for the CEO. She also created and directed the advocacy communications division for a statewide association and launched a newspaper covering fast-growing communities in Central Texas.

“The director of communications role is key for enhancing the School’s national and global visibility,” said Dean Eun-Ok Im, PhD, MPH, RN, CNS, FAAN. “Jaime’s passion for storytelling and connecting with audiences will help advance our position in research, education and community outreach as one of the leading nursing schools in the nation.”

Lee received an MA in Mass Communication and a BA in English from Texas State University and is an active volunteer in several professional and community organizations.



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School of Nursing

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