NOVEMBER 2020

RESEARCH UPDATES
The college is pleased to celebrate a number of faculty grants and publications. p2

EQUITY & INCLUSION
We are working to create policies and an environment where every member feels like they belong in our college and in the nursing profession. p5

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS
Three College of Nursing faculty were inducted as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing. p7

photo by Sarah Schaub

NURSING.WSU.EDU
Dear colleagues,

Thank you all for being our partners in educating the next generation of nursing professionals. Right now we’re all consumed with getting through this once-in-a-generation public health emergency. But we’re not just getting through – I’m convinced that the lessons we’re learning right now will transform professional education to transform health care post-COVID. Our nurse practitioner students are learning how to deliver care effectively and efficiently via telehealth, which could bring new options for primary care in rural and urban areas. Our undergraduate curriculum may well incorporate more virtual lectures so that we can free up resources to enhance in-person skills education and simulations.

And many of our researchers have pivoted to examine different impacts of COVID-19. The challenges of this pandemic have presented all of us with opportunities to reexamine our processes and assumptions. While we were thrust into this consequential time in our history, we do get to choose how we respond.

I look forward to meeting all of you in the coming months. Meanwhile, please don’t hesitate to call or email me, at mary.koithan@wsu.edu, and (509) 324-7292.

Sincerely,
Mary Koithan, Dean
WSU College of Nursing

RESEARCH UPDATES

Tracy Klein

Sarah Fincham
Colleagues (Deborah Eti, Jaclyn Thatcher, and Connie Nguyen-Truong) and I received notification in late Spring that our manuscript, “Implementing Educational Scaffolding Methods to Facilitate Scholarly Writing,” had been accepted for the Teaching Tips section of Nurse Educator. It has been published online ahead of print.

Shelly Fritz
Awarded R01 Supplement “A clinician-in-the-loop smart home to support health monitoring and intervention for chronic conditions: Supplement to focus on Alzheimer’s and/or other dementias” ($366,710k)

Kawkab Shishani

Ka’imi Sinclair
“Pathways to Improving Health of Alaskan Natives Through Cash-Transfers Programs: What is the Meaning and the Role of “Free Money?” Ka`imi Sinclair, PhD, MPH (PI) with Mariana Amorim, PhD. WSU Interdisciplinary Research & Innovation Seed (IRIS) Grant Program. $20,000 total costs. 06/01/20-05/30/21.

Manuscripts

(Ka‘imi Sinclair, con’t)

Mary Koithan
Co-editor of the nursing textbook Integrative Nursing (2019). Continue to serve as a consultant for the Arizona Nursing Inclusive Excellence HRSA-funded program and the Indians into Nursing: Career Advancement and Transitions Program that support academic enrichment and success strategies for students from under-represented backgrounds in nursing and the health sciences.

Marian Wilson
Received a $20,000 Academic/Community Partnership Award from the The National Institutes of Health as part of the University of Washington’s Institute of Translational Health Sciences. The project “COMFORT: Community-engaged Options to Maximize and Facilitate Opioid Reduction through Treatment” is a partnership with Spokane Regional Health District. Health Officer Dr. Bob Lutz and project manager Heidi Wilson organized the Non-Opioid Pain Management group, as part of the Spokane Regional Opioid Task Force. The COMFORT pilot study led by Dr. Wilson is the result of the group’s work to increase use of non-pharmacological pain management treatments.

Recent Publications

Tullamora Landis
Presenting ongoing research related to professional identity scale development at the Professional Identity in Nursing Forum 2020 on September 9th and 10th.
Accepted for an oral presentation at the Sigma’s Creating Healthy Work Environments 2021 conference in Austin, TX.

Celestina Barbosa-Leiker
WSU nursing students will complete part of their clinical education on the Palouse in an arrangement spurred by the pandemic, but long sought by both the College of Nursing and the Pullman community.

The College of Nursing in Spokane, WSU administration in Pullman, Whitman County Public Health and other community partners worked quickly to put the program in place after a rise in COVID-19 cases stretched local nursing staffs thin.

“It’s neighbors helping neighbors and we are glad to be able to assist,” said WSU College of Nursing Dean Mary Koithan.

Students in the College of Nursing’s RN Refresher Course are completing their state-required clinical hours in long-term care facilities, under the guidance of nursing faculty and clinical preceptors. Washington State University is providing apartments for the students in Pullman.

While the first students to take part are registered nurses who are working to re-activate their licenses, the College of Nursing hopes to expand the program to include undergraduate nursing students.

“It’s an elegant solution to a truly heart-breaking situation and incredible need,” Koithan explained.

In a small community like Pullman, there aren’t many nurses who can fill in when a health emergency hits, whether that’s COVID-19 or the seasonal flu, said Troy Henderson, director of Whitman County Public Health.

In addition, it’s an opportunity for the College of Nursing to establish relationships with community clinical partners so that it can offer nursing students a clinical experience in Pullman.

For this clinical rotation, RN Refresher Course students will complete all of their required clinical hours in one site, a recommendation consistent with reducing the community spread of COVID-19. If undergraduate students are able to follow suit and attend a clinical rotation in Pullman, they will also remain in the community for the duration of their experience, participating remotely in their usual coursework online on the days they’re not in clinicals.
The College of Nursing, like many other institutions, is grappling with questions of health equity, workforce diversity and social justice.

This summer a group of our students and alumni called on us to more openly confront racism in higher education and in the health care system. In response, we held a two-hour listening session to hear the concerns and perspectives of nursing students regarding diversity, equity and inclusion in health care and in the college. The session went well, with action items identified.

That session and all that led up to it strengthened our resolve to make fundamental changes. Our goal isn’t simply diversity among faculty and students, though that’s certainly a big part.

We’re really striving for a sense of belonging. We want to create policies and structures, and environment and mindset to ensure every student, faculty and staff member feels like they belong in our college, that they belong in the nursing profession.

We do that by examining our hiring and enrollment practices and how we handle promotion and tenure. We need to solicit input from community partners, students and faculty. And we need to offer more support to people who are struggling.

At the WSU College of Nursing we’re working on two big changes that will help. First, our new curriculum that begins next year, which was adopted with input from students, focuses on health promotion and risk reduction and incorporates lessons of culture and equity throughout. Students will learn what systemic racism looks like, because we can’t expect them to change what they don’t recognize.

Second, we’ll begin using a holistic admissions process that will evaluate our prospective students as we treat our patients – as whole people. We’ll think about who will make a successful nurse, not just a successful student. We’ll look for people who have demonstrated determination, because we know these are people who’ll advocate for their patients and their profession.

Academic nursing can set seeds of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in students. It’s our goal in the WSU College of Nursing to model how these seeds can flourish.
FEATURED FACULTY

**Dr. Connie Nguyen-Truong**

Dr. Connie Kim Yen Nguyen-Truong, an assistant professor at the Washington State University College of Nursing in Vancouver, was honored with the 2020 Excellence and Innovation in Teaching Award from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

Nguyen-Truong is the first person in the WSU College of Nursing to be recognized by the AACN for this prestigious national award.

AACN hailed Nguyen-Truong’s work for representing “transformative, culturally sensitive advances in teaching and learning for the benefit of nursing and other disciplines.”

Nguyen-Truong’s research and teaching focuses on cultural immersion experiences and enhancing communications between nursing faculty and students and representatives of minority communities, including Micronesian Islanders, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, and Laotian partners. She has developed innovative, culturally safe, linguistically appropriate engagement and educational curriculums and models.

**Dr. Lois James, Dr. Stephen James**

A simulator to train law-enforcement personnel to recognize implicit bias developed by Dr. Lois James, assistant professor and assistant dean for research, and Dr. Stephen James, assistant professor, was licensed for worldwide use by MILO Range Training Systems. The company offers interactive programs for simulation training systems to government, military, law enforcement and police agencies.

**Debbie Brinker**

Debbie Brinker was named a 2020 Woman of Achievement by the YWCA of Spokane.

Brinker, assistant dean for clinical affairs & community engagement at the WSU College of Nursing, was honored in the Science, Technology and Environment category.

“Debbie Brinker is dedicated to advancing healthcare equity and access in Washington State,” the YWCA of Spokane said in announcing this year’s Women of Achievement. “Debbie lives out her passion of training future generations of highly qualified nurses. Debbie is also committed to diversifying the nursing workforce in Washington by ensuring that all nurses have the necessary foundations to be leaders in the healthcare system and optimizing the healthcare experiences for a wide range of patients, families, and communities.” Associate Professor Dr. Tracy Klein was one of seven WSU faculty members elected by fellow faculty to the Faculty Status Committee.

The committee hears appeals from faculty members, including those when reappointment, tenure and promotion are denied/deferred. The committee reports and makes recommendations to the WSU president.
**Dr. Roschelle Fritz, Dr. Renee Hoeksel, Dr. Kawkab Shishani**

Three Washington State University College of Nursing faculty were inducted as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing.

“Being named a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) is one of the most prestigious honors in nursing education,” said Dr. Mary Koithan, Dean of the WSU College of Nursing. “This year WSU has three faculty who are being honored, a record for the College of Nursing and an indication of our faculty’s influence on the discipline and profession of nursing.”

The faculty who were inducted during this year’s virtual ceremony are:

- **Dr. Roschelle (Shelly) Fritz**, assistant professor at the WSU College of Nursing in Vancouver.
- **Dr. Renee Hoeksel**, professor emeritus at the WSU College of Nursing in Vancouver.
- **Dr. Kawkab Shishani**, associate professor at the WSU College of Nursing in Spokane.

These faculty members join Drs. Mel Haberman, Mary Koithan, Louise Kaplan, Tracy Klein, Janet Katz and Elizabeth Schenk, as well as emeritus faculty Charlene Clark and Drs. Margaret Bruya, Anne Hirsch and Patricia Butterfield as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing.

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**Dr. Lonnie Nelson**

Dr. Lonnie Nelson, associate professor at the College of Nursing in Spokane, recently received the Largest New Team Grant award from the WSU Office of Research in recognition of a $9.67 million grant to study Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias in the Native population, with Nelson as the principal investigator.

Last year, before he gained tenure, he was one of two researchers receiving WSU’s Pacesetter Award for pre-tenure faculty who “set new achievement standards in obtaining grants, publications and citations.”

In addition, Nelson was appointed by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to a panel of scientific experts who are evaluating potential COVID-19 vaccines for how they will be perceived and accepted by Native American and indigenous populations.
PROGRAM UPDATES

RN-BSN
Dr. Vicki Denson became director of the program on July 1. The RN-BSN program at Washington State University celebrated its 30th anniversary this fall.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has achieved a nearly 15% increase in statewide enrollment this fall compared with a year ago, with 148 students enrolled statewide (114 of whom are on the Vancouver campus).

Proposed curricular changes have been completed and are awaiting review by the university and the state nursing commission, with full implementation targeted for fall 2021.

Work continues for the development of a Concurrent Enrollment Program (CEP), also referred to as dual enrollment, partnering with interested community colleges.

BSN
Will be following the same mostly distance education model for spring semester, with the same exception for skills and simulation labs. Both undergraduate and graduate programs have learned a lot – quickly – about teaching skills competency remotely.

BSN students have participated in flu vaccine clinics around Spokane in conjunction with the Spokane Regional Health District.

Syllabi for the new BSN curriculum, scheduled to start in fall 2021, are presently under review by the university in Pullman.

The Holistic Admissions Task Force continues to work on implementation strategies for a revised recruitment and admission process for the College.

MN
The MN and PhD programs are set to become part of WICHE’s Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), which will allow residents of other Western states to enroll in those programs and receive significant reductions in nonresident tuition. This will greatly expand our recruiting opportunities for those programs.

Enrollment in the MN-Public Health program is robust. We will have 12 students graduating in May 2021, which is one of the largest graduating classes in this program in some time.

Many of those students apply to the post-Master’s DNP program within 1-2 years, and we’re seeing more interest in the DNP-Public Health program as well.

DNP
Doctor of Nursing Practice students complete a project with a clinical organization that aims to improve healthcare outcomes, by recommending an evidence-based change in care delivery or policy or evaluating an existing program. We’ve just made it possible for clinical agencies to suggest DNP projects that one or more of our students could undertake. You’ll find more information and a web form to fill out if you’d like to recommend a project for Spring 2021 at https://nursing.wsu.edu/academics/dnp-student-projects. Recent examples of DNP projects include:

- Implementation and Evaluation of a Fall Prevention Program in an Acute Care Setting: A Quality Improvement Project
- Evaluating a Team-Based Approach to Lowering Hemoglobin A1c in the Diabetic Population in a Primary Care Setting
- Robotic Companion Animal Therapy: A Quality Improvement Project in a Veterans Affairs Hospice Unit
- Improving Diabetes Self-Management in Older Russian/Slavic Immigrants: A Quality Improvement Project

PhD
All the graduate programs co-hosted a series of virtual open houses this summer and fall and we’ve had excellent attendance. Like other programs, we expect that we’ll take some lessons from the adaptations we’ve made during the pandemic and apply them in the future. Upcoming: we’re hosting Linfield College faculty and students in a Virtual Q&A session about the program.

We have three students doing their preliminary exams this fall with planned studies in the areas of learning how uncertainty affects certain cancer patients who receive stem cell transplants; investigating how therapists counsel neurodiverse couples in a relationship; and if/how complexity as a concept and health indicator for older adults can be operationalized and measured in gero-technology research, such as use of sensors in smart homes.
Tri-Cities

The program is finalizing a plan with Kadlec Regional Medical Center that will address staffing issues, student recruitment to DNP programs and DNP clinical placement issues among other things. More will be announced about this in the near future.

Programs transitioned to a hybrid virtual format, and though students are stressed, they are rising to the occasion. The addition of new lab preceptor Jill Prior has been a vital part in making this transition successful. Clinical agencies have been very welcoming and helpful in facilitating learning and allowing access to our students.

The DNP program has increased the number of applicants accepted, to 6 in the Family Nurse Practitioner track and 4 in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner track.

Yakima

Yakima students have been busy this fall with multiple flu vaccine clinics in conjunction with the Yakima Health District.

Diversity Club hosted an all-campus blood drive in conjunction with the American Red Cross.

The program continues to settle into its new location on the campus of Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences – but everyone is looking forward to the time when faculty, staff and students can all occupy the wonderful new setting.