

Faculty, Staff, Students Get Honors, Awards & Publications

AY 2025-2026

UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty, staff and students were recognized with honors, awards and publications.

Fall Semester 2025

- **Tia Robinson**, student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the \$10,000 Brave of Heart Nursing Scholarship for the 2025-26 academic year.
- **Jordyn Rhone**, student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the \$5,000 Brave of Heart Nursing Scholarship for fall 2025.
- Medical Reserve Corps volunteer, **Christi Jordan**, assistant professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, helped the District 4 Public Health Emergency Preparedness team coordinate logistics and traffic flow at the Carroll County Farmers' Market.
- In Fall Semester 2025, 18 nursing students were part of the UWG Honors College.
- **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, Dean, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, published in *Minority Nurse*, "Graduation Season and the Rise of a New Generation of Nurses: A Beacon of Hope Amid a National Shortage."
- Emiline Jeffares, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing Graduate 2023, RN, Labor & Delivery, Tanner Medical Center, Villa Rica, for received the DAISY Award.
- **Kasey Nestor**, MSN-Ed, RN, CNE, and EdD alum, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the 2025 FNA Nurse Educator Icon Award from the Florida Nurses Association.
- **Charmaine Hutchinson**, MSN, FNP, RN, CNE, and EdD alum, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the National League for Nursing (NLN) Southern Research Society Doctoral Research Award for her research, "Demographic and Other Factors as Predictors of Resilience in Nursing Students."
- **Dr. Michelle Venn**, Assistant Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health Outstanding Peer Reviewer Award.
- **Dr. Susie Jonassen** presented her research, "Supporting the Shift: Mentorship Needs in the Transition from Bedside Nurse to Clinical Instructor," at the International Association for Leadership Science in Nursing Conference.
- **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students** administered flu shots at both the UWG Carrollton and Newnan Campus Flu Shot Clinics.
- **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students** presented safety and first aid to Carrollton Elementary students.

- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing student, **Jalen Adams**, won 2025 Homecoming King.
- **Stephanie Richards**, Administrative Manager, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, was elected Secretary for the Steering Committee of the Business Officers of Nursing Schools Leadership Network (BONUS) for the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students, **Vanessa Morales Ruiz, Rebekah Williams, Madeline Stinson, Jasmine Hernandez, Jack Wessels, Alana Carroll**, presented posters and engaged with parents at the East Carrollton Park, Climb Out West Georgia event.
- Five UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students also played UWG softball, Rylee Green, Calli Hardison, Jacelyn Lahr, Kaprice Leonard and Emerson Miller.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing **Dr. Susie Jonassen** and Carrollton 2026 nursing students led a class on an introduction to nursing to UWG Freshmen in their Cornerstone Classes.
- **Ansley Collins, Caroline Brown, and Natalie Couch**, 2026 Fall Newnan Cohort nursing students, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, all ran the Angel Dash 5k in Carrollton, Georgia.
- The American Association of Colleges of Nursing featured **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing** in its weekly digest, News Watch, for the nursing video created by AACN-TV.
- **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students and faculty** manned the First Aid Tent at the 6th Annual Monster Mash and Bash at the House of Pickleball, Newnan.
- **Dr. Susie Jonassen**, BSN Director and Assistant Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, spoke at Blake Bass Middle School in Sharpsburg, GA for Hometown Heroes Day to promote service, outreach, and share about the nursing profession to potential future nurses.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, Dean; **Lara Pease**, SON Ambassador; **Palak Patel**, SON Ambassador; **Laura Taylor**, Academic Advisor; **Jody Bryan**, Assistant Professor; **Bethany Schmelzer**, Academic Advisor; **Celina Bowen**, SON Ambassador; and **Camilla Garcia**, SON Ambassador participated with the UWG Fall Showcase.
- **Dr. Susie Jonassen** represented both UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing and University System of Georgia observing the amazing work Dr. Quyen Phan and her CAPES Project Team at Emory University are doing to support clinical instructor and preceptor preparedness across the southeast region in their final CAPES Cohort. CAPES-Academy for Clinical Instructor and Preceptor Excellence in the Southeast.
- Two Nursing students were selected to present at the UWG Graduate Research Symposium this semester, **Sandra Vargovich** and **Megan Ross**.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing student **Albien Rafael Vergara Tubongbanua**, EdD(c), MN, RN, was conferred as a Fellow of the Society of Internationally Educated Nurses (FSIEN).

- Mr. Paul Duso, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, gave a presentation on the importance of a whole food plant-based lifestyle to **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty, staff and students**.
- **Reece Cook** and **Jennifer York**, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students, presented at the UWG Honors Showcase.
- **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students** participated in a Baby Boot Camp, practicing labor and delivery.
- **Dr. Tonya Herring**, alum of UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing EdD program, and **Dr. Kelly Dyar**, Associate Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, are published in the Nurse Educator. The article is Dr. Herring's dissertation findings, "Prelicensure Academic Nurse Educators' Use of Exam and Item Analysis."
- **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, dean, and **Dr. Katie Morales**, associate dean, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, attended the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Leadership Conference which included the AACN 2025 Hill Day where more than 220 AACN members, representing 42 states, had more than 200 meetings with their members of Congress.
- Drs. **Susie Jonassen** and **Pam Dunagan** represented UWG THSON at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Transform 2025 Conference.
- **Dr. Susie Jonassen**, BSN Director & Assistant Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, was awarded the competitive \$30K Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grant through the University System of Georgia to help the Tanner Health School of Nursing implement the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) to help lessen the burden on students.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing Fall 2025 BSN, RN-BSN, and Graduate Award Recipients: **Dr. Albien Rafel Tubongbanua**, Outstanding EdD Student; **Emily Atwood**, Dean's Award for Academic Achievement; **Saige Wall**, BSN Nursing Excellence; **Kaylee Babb**, BSN Clinical Nursing Excellence; **Reece Cook**, DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students; and **Kireet Sangadala**, RN-BSN Nursing Excellence.
- The Stone Center for Family Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation held an AI, Empathy & Innovation session with UWG faculty panelists who also participated in the conversation: Dr. Nisha Gupta, Professor of Psychology, Dr. Saeed Tabar, Professor of MIS, **Dr. Sophia Robinson-Harris**, Assistant Professor of Nursing, and Dr. Shirajum Munir, Professor of Computer Science.

Spring Semester 2026

- The Compassion Center Mobile Medical Clinic in Cartersville, GA awarded Dr. Katie Morales the Clubhouse Spirit award for "recognition of outstanding dedication and contributions to the Compassion Center."
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty, **Dr. Amy Yarbrough**, **Dr. Laura Phillips**, and **Dr. Kelly Dyar**, published a teaching tip article in the Nurse Educator.

- **Dr. Kelly Dyar**, Director of Inquiry and Scholarship & Associate Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, selected to the 2026 Class of Fellows for the American Nephrology Nurses Association.
- A total of 10 nursing students were selected as Nursing Ambassadors: **Natalie Couch, Celina Bowen, Kennedy Conrey, Camilla Garcia, Nathan Merritt, Isha Patel, Palak Patel, Miracle Sales, Eric Scott** and **Blessing Udoudo**.
- Two UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing EdD graduates were selected as part of the 2026 National League for Nursing (NLN) Leadership cohorts, **Amber Arsenault**, 2024 graduate, and **Kasey Nestor**, 2025 graduate. Amber will also be participating in the 2026 NLN LEAD Program.
- **Dr. Shakia Johnson**, Assistant Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented at the UWG Kappa Tau Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty attended the two-day Georgia Association for Nursing Education, Inc. (GANE) 2026 Conference “Excellence and Innovation In Nursing Education” in Greensboro, GA. **Dr. Quetina Howell, Dr. Imelda Reyes** (dean), **Dr. Shakia Johnson, Dr. Stephanie Belim, Dr. Laura Phillips**, Professor **Mandy Bowman, Dr. Amy Yarbrough, Dr. Susie Jonassen, Dr. Pam Dunagan, Dr. Cindy Jones, Dr. Tanya Naguszewski**, and **Dr. Katie Morales**.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty, **Dr. Susie Jonassen**, presented at the Georgia Association for Nursing Education, Inc. (GANE) 2026 Conference in a solo presentation, “From Bedside to Beside the Student: Building Confidence Through a Structured Clinical Instruction Orientation” and she also presented with Professor **Mandy Bowman** “AI Without Wi-Fi: Using Artificial Intelligence to Power Tech-Free Learning.”
- **Dr. Shakia Johnson**, assistant professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented at the Georgia Association for Nursing Education, Inc. (GANE) 2026 Conference and received first place honors for her poster presentation.
- **Kaitlin Shaw**, MSN, RN, BSN Class of Spring 2019, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, is the recipient of the International Association for Human Caring Shirley C. Gordon Award.
- **Dr. Albien Rafael V. Tubungbanua**, EdD graduate Class of Fall 2025, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing is one of only 10 2025 Lopez Awardees. For the third consecutive year, the Filipino Nursing Diaspora Network (FiND) proudly presented the Lopez Award.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty and students attended the women’s conference sponsored by The Grove, women’s ministry and mentoring at the Passion Church, Atlanta, Drs. **Stephanie Belim, Katie Morales** and **Sophia Robinson-Harris**.
- Drs. **Imelda Reyes**, dean, and **Katie Morales**, associate dean, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, were judges for the first-ever University of West Georgia collegiate ethics bowl. Dr. **Tanya Naguszewski**, assistant professor, was a moderator for the event.

- **Jada Alexander**, RN, graduate, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received DAISY Award from Tanner Medical Center, Villa Rica.
- **UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty and students** discussed the nursing program with prospective students and their parents at the UWG Admitted Student Day Academic Tabling Fair.
- **Katie Bly**, MSN Nurse Educator student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received a DAISY award from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA).
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students (l-r), **Tiana Neal, Madison Kelly, Ebony Morris, Ashley Henderson**, and **Anna Sumner**, presented "Postpartum Depression: Signs, Symptoms, and Resources" at the Climb Out West Georgia Service Learning Project.
- In 2025-2026 the **Tanner Health School of Nursing** awarded \$458,141 in scholarships to students.
- **Dr. Tonya Herring**, EdD, RN, CNE, Assistant Professor and BSN Coordinator, Columbus State University School of Nursing, and alumna of the UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing EdD Program recently received the Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce Nursing Schools Grant for the Columbus State University's BSN program.
- **Jalen Adams**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented at the UWG Scholars' Day, "Breaking Barriers: Mentorship as a Strategy to Increase Black Male Representation in CRNA Programs." Jalen was mentored by **Dr. Stephanie Belim**.
- **Jacqueline Daniel**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing and nurse extern, Tanner Health, Villa Rica, received the DAISY award from Tanner Health.
- **Shari Mane De La Pena**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented at the UWG Scholars' Day Undergraduate Research Conference, "Workplace Violence in Nursing: Is it Part of the Job Description?" Shari was mentored by **Dr. Stephanie Belim** and **Dr. Quetina Howell**.
- Two UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty members were honored with DAISY Awards in recognition of their extraordinary commitment to teaching and their compassionate approach to sharing nursing knowledge, **Dr. Kim Crawford** and Professor **Gracelove Bonful**.
- **Sarah Pack**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented at the UWG Scholars' Day Undergraduate Research Conference, "The Exploration of Drowning Prevention." Sarah was mentored by **Dr. Stephanie Belim**.
- **Dr. Rafael Tubongbanua**, alumnus, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing EdD program, published "Nursing As Caring Theory: A Guide for Nurses Toward Discovery and Awakening" in Nursology.
- The 2026 UWG Focus magazine published, showcasing UWG faculty. Representing Tanner Health School of Nursing was **Dr. Tanya Naguszewski**.
- In partnership with the West Georgia Child Advocacy Center and as their service learning project, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students gave a presentation on recognizing signs of child abuse, specifically focusing on cases

involving strangulation, **Torianna Jackson, Madison Brace, Destiny Colton, Deja Jone, and Camilla Garcia.**

- **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, Dean of the UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, and retired art professor **Bruce Bobick** met at UWG's Evening of Gratitude. Professor Bobick relayed how he had created the Nursing wolf sculpture that currently stands in front of the Nursing Building. Former Dean **Kathryn Grams** commissioned the piece in 2014.
- Four UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students presented, "The Mediterranean Diet," at Tanner Health's Get Healthy Live Well event, **Caroline Brown, Celina Bowen, Rita Lancheros, and Kimberly Moreno.**
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing student **Deja Jones** received the DAISY award from Wellstar Douglas.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing 2026 Spring Semester Award Recipients: **Ashlee Fuller**, Outstanding EdD Graduate Student Award; **Katie Bly**, Outstanding MSN Graduate Student Award; four students with 4.0 GPA Dean's Award for Academic Achievement, **Kirstin Brock, Shari Mane De LA Pena, Kylie Dixon** and **Ava Tyson**; **Rylee Nicole Green**, BSN Nursing Excellence Award; **Erin Tuorto**, Clinical Nursing Excellence Award; and **Jalen Adams**, DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Student.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing 2026 Spring Semester Honor College Graduates: **Sarah Pack, Jalen Adams** and **Shari Mane De La Pena.**
- UWG CelebrateWest Service Award Ceremony for five, 10, and 15 years of service: **Kelly Dyar**, 15 years, **Oliver Duah**, 10 years, and **Katie Morales**, 5 years.
- At the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Pi Nu Chapter, Induction Ceremony, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing inducted seven students and one faculty member into the honor society. Also, **Dr. Laura Phillips**, associate professor, received the Pi Nu Kathryn Grams Excellence in Nursing Award. **Dr. Christina Calamaro**, Director of Research and Evidenced Based Practice for Nursing and Allied Health at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, was the guest speaker. In attendance nursing students: **Jalen Adams, Joshua Ralston, Kirstin Brock; Mandy Bowman**, Assistant Professor; and **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, Dean; **Dr. Kathryn Grams, Dr. Laura Phillips** and **Dr. Tanya Naguszewski**. Other student inductees included **Melanie Baker Caldwell, Crystal Dawn Curry, Yvonne Marie Murphy, and Palak N. Patel.**
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing Clinical Specialty Practice students did a great job presenting know your numbers cardio metabolic health at four at risk populations in West Georgia to the Center for Integrative Wellness, **Sarah Gross**, Assistant Director, Center for Integrative Wellness, and nursing students **Jacqueline Arnold, Jasmine Benson, Madison Nahory, and Samantha Russell.**
- Students from the Tanner Health School of Nursing presented at the Carroll County Mental Health Advocates facility, sharing important information on mental health crisis awareness. Their presentation highlighted key warning signs, common triggers, and effective coping mechanisms to support individuals in crisis. Presenters included **Levi Galm, Kamia Dunn, Jaden Stanley, Hadlee**

Black, and **Diamond Odom**, all UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing had a 50th birthday and we celebrated. Students, faculty, staff and alumni attended. demonstrated professionalism, knowledge, and a strong commitment to community mental health education.

- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing faculty and students gave information at the UWG Spring Semester Showcase for High School students, **Dr. Shakia Johnson**, assistant professor; **Sydney Moody-Smith**, academic advisor; **Laura Taylor**, academic advisor II; **Dr. Katie Morales**, associate dean of nursing and Marcia Davis, assistant professor.
- Two UWG Tanner Health School Nursing Graduate Nursing students presented at the Nursing Science Symposium at Georgia Highlands College. EdD student **Lourdes Webster** presented, “Doctoral Students’ Perspectives on Preparing Nursing Students as Advocates for Health Equity,” and MSN student **Bryson Shiflett** presented, “titled Increasing Nursing Students’ Postpartum Mental Health Assessment Knowledge.” **Dr. Katie Morales**, Associate Dean of Nursing, and **Dr. Pam Dunagan**, Interim Graduate Program Director, attended.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing attended the Wellstar Paulding Medical Center recognition ceremony celebrating its redesignation as an American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Magnet with Distinction hospital—one of the highest honors in nursing nationwide. Tanner Health School of Nursing attending: **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, dean; **Heather Haney**, MSN student; **Lynita Antonetty**, preceptor; and **Dr. Katie Morales**, associate dean of nursing.
- Twice is Nice. During Spring Semester, **Dr. Susie Jonassen**, received notification from the University System of Georgia that she has received a second Affordable Learning Grant. What is Affordable Learning?

Summer Semester 2026

- Sharing UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing information at the Wellstar Paulding Professional Development Day: **Dr. Denise Morris**, Assistant Dean of RN-BSN and Assistant Professor, and **Stephanie Richards**, Director of Nursing Operations.
- **Dr. Kelly Dyar**, Director of Inquiry and Scholarship & Associate Professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, presented, “Nephrology Nursing Update: Caring for People with Kidney Failure,” at the unipg Nursing Conference in Foligno, Italy.
- Faculty and nursing students conducted sessions at the UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing Healthcare Summer Camp. Faculty/Staff: **Ashly Moody**, camp director; **Gina Barthelemy-Morton**, **Dr. Quetina Howell**, **Dr. Cindy Johnson**, **Dr. Shakia Johnson**, **Dr. Susie Jonassen**, **Dr. Katie Morales**, **Dr. Denise Morris**, and **Dr. Imelda Reyes**, Dean. Nursing students: Jacki Arnold, Emillie Charles, Ansley Collins, Natalie Couch, Madelyn Heatherly, Ashley Henderson, Torianna Jackson, Erica Kaba, Madison Kelly, Samantha Russell, A’niaya Smith, Anna Smith, Jaidyn Webb, and Jaden Young.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing had a **50th birthday** and we celebrated. Students, faculty, staff and alumni attended.

- **Dr. Kim Crawford**, assistant professor, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, traveled to the African Bible University in Kampala, Uganda where she held a health training on infectious diseases, first aid and CPR.
- **Ridley Bleu Winters**, student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing and Wellstar Paulding Medical Center, received The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students.
- Tanner Health School of Nursing **Kim Crawford**, PhD, MPH, APRN, FNP-C, assistant professor, and **Robin Kern**, MSN, RN, EdD student, presented at UWG's 13th Annual Innovations in Pedagogy Conference, "Ways to Improves Clinical Judgement."
- Tanner Health School of Nursing **Quetina Howell**, PhD, RN, CNE, PMHNP-BC, Assistant Professor; **Katie Morales**, PhD, RN, CNE, Associate Dean of Nursing & Professor; **Pam Dunagan**, PhD, RN, Associate Professor; and **Tanya Naguszewski**, PhD, RN, CNE, Assistant Professor, presented at UWG's 13th Annual Innovations in Pedagogy Conference, "Using Backward Course Design to Implement Competency-Based Education."
- Tanner Health School of Nursing **Susie M. Jonassen**, PhD, MSN-Ed, RN, CPN, Assistant Dean of Pre-licensure Nursing & Assistant Professor; **Cindy Johnson**, PhD, RN, CHSE-A, Experiential Learning Center Assistant Dean & Associate Professor; and **Mandy Bowman**, MSN, RNC-OB, Assistant Professor, presented at UWG's 13th Annual Innovations in Pedagogy Conference, "Using Evidence-Based Debriefing to Teach Student Thinking Across Disciplines."
- **John Doody**, RN, Tanner Medical Center, Carrollton, and alumnus, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, received the DAISY Award.
- Nurse Approved® selecteds five Nurse News & Media Interns for Summer 2026 – **Jacqueline Daniel**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, is one of the five.
- **Nadia Davila**, an alumna of the UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, has been named to the University of West Georgia Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026.
- Two UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing students, **Jacqueline Daniel** and **Sophia Andrea Ortiz**, joined the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) as student members and attended the July educational dinner hosted by LifeLink of Georgia.
- **Craig Brown**, BFA, Graduate Studies Associate, and **Dr. Katie Morales**, Associate Dean of Nursing & Professor, welcomed students at the UWG Graduate Student Orientation.
- **Jacqueline Daniel** and **Sophia Ortiz**, nursing students, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, attended the FLOURISH+ CME/CNE Summit in Atlanta, Charting New Territories in the Management of Individuals with Immune-Mediated Inflammatory Disease and Obesity: Calming Concomitant Pathologies.
- **Dr. Susie M. Jonassen**, Assistant Dean of Prelicensure Nursing, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, served in medical clinics in Belize this summer.
- UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing Assistant Professors **Tanya Naguszewski**, PhD, RN, CNE, and **Jody Bryan**, MSN, MPH, RN, attended the

American Association of Colleges of Nursing End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium.

- **Jacqueline Daniel**, nursing student, UWG Tanner Health School of Nursing, recently attended “Lessons from the ICU: Advanced Wound Management in Practice,” sponsored by Coloplast in partnership with the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) and the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).