



TANNER HEALTH SYSTEM SCHOOL OF NURSING

Newsletter

Fall 2023

Volume 7

Issue 1



Notes from Dean Jenny Schuessler

Happy Holidays from the School of Nursing!

As we are coming to the close of fall semester and 2023, I can't help but notice our beautiful campus, it is truly West Gorgeous! Further, excitement abounds at UWG for many reasons, including the transition of UWG athletics to NCAA Division I status effective July 1, 2024! In the School of Nursing, fall semester includes welcoming our newly admitted RN to BSN, MSN, and EdD students and seeing our new BSN student cohorts begin their clinical rotations. In addition, some students are looking forward to their December graduations!!

Tanner Health System School of Nursing students are truly the best of the West and are especially energetic, vibrant, and focused on their studies this semester!

This semester ends with several special events, the pinning and

graduation celebration on December 8th, UWG commencement on December 9th, and our annual community of advisors' breakfast meeting on December 8th, 8:00 am – 10:00 am. Please [click here](#) to register for the breakfast meeting, and/ or give us feedback about our graduates and programs.

Our vision, "Academic Excellence in a Caring Environment," has never been more relevant as we are preparing the next generation of nurses, nurse leaders, and nurse educators for this challenging moment in history. I am confident that UWG nurses are well equipped to handle these challenges with a unique blend of knowledge, skills, and compassion. We are proud to be members of this noble profession and thrilled to share with you the latest news from the school in our annual newsletter.

This issue highlights our extraordinary students, alumni, and faculty. First, notice the composite picture of the spring 2023 pre-licensure BSN graduating class. This class is the largest graduating BSN class in the history of the school!! I think you will find the stories of recent BSN graduates Drew Barron, Kaylyn Fairchild, and Dana O'Neil amazing!

You will see that the research and capstone projects of our EdD and MSN students continue to be recognized as excellent, with EdD students Tabitha Quillen and Tonya

Herring receiving coveted NLN research scholarships. Further, the capstone projects of Christi Jordan and Savannah Kelley are featured. These scholars represent two of five MSN graduates with capstone projects that have been tapped for publication in prestigious nursing education journals. The SON was well-represented at the UWG annual alumni awards banquet. Please see the story about these honored colleagues. After a two-year COVID hiatus, our study abroad course was back on track; please see the story about this impactful experience. Let these and our other stories inspire you!

And finally, thank you for your support and dedication to the School of Nursing as we continue to empower the next generation of nurses, nurse leaders, and nursing educators. Your generosity, engagement, and mentorship has made a big difference! We invite all of you-students, alumni, clinical partners, parents, donors, faculty, staff, and colleagues-to join us in making a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of citizens and communities of Georgia, the region, and the world. Please consider a gift before the end of the year. Contact Ketty Cusick, Development Officer, for more information about giving to nursing (kcusick@westga.edu)

or [give, by clicking here.](#)

Go West! Go Wolves! Go Nursing!

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BSN Spring 2023

TANNER HEALTH SYSTEM SCHOOL OF NURSING



BSN SPRING CLASS OF 2023



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

BSN Fall 2022

TANNER HEALTH SYSTEM SCHOOL OF NURSING



BSN FALL CLASS OF 2022



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

UWG THS School of Nursing Ambassadors

The School of Nursing (SON) appointed its inaugural class of ambassadors spring 2023. To be considered as a SON ambassador, nursing students are required to have a grade point average of at least 2.75 and evidence of professionalism and leadership abilities. Further, qualified nursing students must be nominated by a faculty member and complete an application. In a very competitive process, 10 students were selected for the inaugural class.

While serving, SON ambassadors receive \$250 scholarships for fall and spring semesters. Their role is to represent the SON at UWG and SON events, welcoming new and prospective students and current and potential SON donors.

Graduating SON ambassadors will be replaced with the same process, ensuring a full roster of ambassadors each semester. New ambassadors will be added in January and June each year.

Meet this year's SON Ambassadors:

Tyler Crowder

A resident of Fayetteville, Georgia, some of the SON events Tyler assisted with

include the STEM Day Nursing and the BSN Student Orientation. Tyler wanted to be a SON Ambassador so he could lead by example and enhance the UWG THS SON nursing community. Tyler enjoys traveling and spending time with his family. And, when he was younger, he wanted to be the next Pablo Picasso.



Tyler Crowder

Stanesha Ford

From Eatonton, Georgia, Stanesha said she has enjoyed being a SON Ambassador especially since it has allowed her to get to know her professors better. Her favorite event was the tabling for



Stanesha Ford

freshmen during the Spring Showcase. It gave her the opportunity to answer questions. "I had the chance to tell them other tips that may help them progress into the nursing program," Stanesha said. She likes to walk and hike and helping the homeless and less fortunate in the Carrollton and greater Atlanta area.

Kristie Gardner

Kristie lives in Newnan and grew up in Moreland, Georgia. She is currently a wound care tech at Piedmont Fayette and plans to work in the ICU upon graduation. As a SON Ambassador, Kristie enjoyed helping others navigate the nursing program through tours and the academic showcase for incoming students. She also enjoyed helping with the pinning ceremony and speaking (cont)

UWG THS School of Nursing Ambassadors (continued)



Kristie Gardner

to new nursing students at their orientation in May. Kristie has also been a competitive adult swimmer and is looking forward to competing in the future.

Janet Nichols

Janet is from Villa Rica, Georgia and upon graduation in 2024, she plans to pursue a career as



Janet Nichols

a labor and delivery nurse. As a SON Ambassador, Janet assisted with tours of the Experiential Learning Center, especially hosting members of HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America-Future Health Professionals) and with other students and parents. She also helped with Summer Nursing Camp Days for high schoolers.

Adelaide Obo

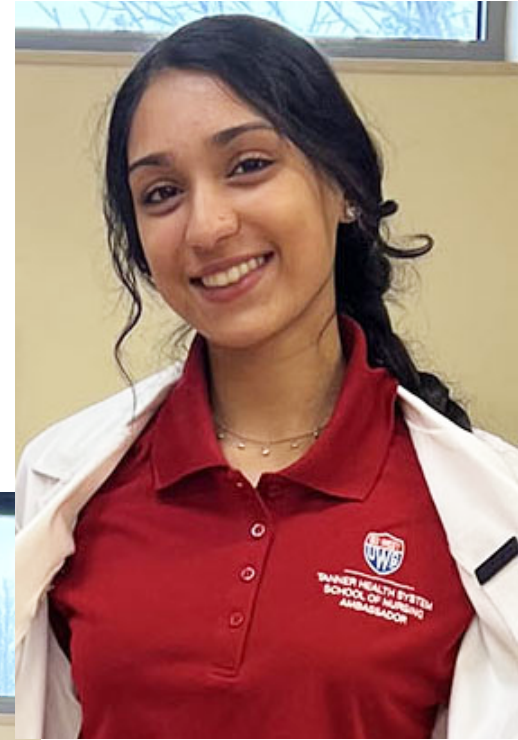
From Ghana, West Africa, Adelaide enjoys being a SON Ambassador because, "it



Adelaide Obo

allows me to give back to my school community in a way that encourages students to pursue their dreams of being nurses." Working toward that goal,

she has helped with student tours of the Nursing Building, including the Experiential Learning Center. She also helped with the Summer Nursing Camp Days for high schoolers.



Piya Patel

Piya Patel

Piya is from Carrollton, Georgia and likes "being able to build connections with my fellow classmates while also having volunteer opportunities relating to nursing." She has helped with tours and fall orientation, including answering new students' questions about nursing and nursing school. She was also one of the hosts for the spring UWG THS SON Scholarship Donor Reception.

UWG THS School of Nursing Ambassadors

(continued)

emergency preparedness for health crises. He likes the opportunity to “give back” and said the Ambassador program allows him to do just that. He, too, hosted during the UWG THS SON Scholarship Donor Reception and at the THS SON Pinning & Hooding Ceremony.

Noah Seagle

Noah is from Rockmart, Georgia and is no stranger to the UWG President’s List (The President’s List recognizes degree seeking students who earn a GPA of 4.0 on a minimum of 12 semester hours of college level courses in which grades of A-F are given), having most recently

Andrew Smith

Andrew is part of the Newnan 2024 cohort. As a SON Ambassador, he has helped with tabling for the School of Nursing for the Admitted Students Day in the spring and with the Summer Nursing Camp for high schoolers. He was able to help the younger students learn hands-on skills like CPR and First Aid with Stop the Bleed training.



Noah Robins

Noah Robins

A member of the Newnan 2023 Cohort and a resident of Newnan, Georgia, Noah enjoyed guiding campers during the Summer Nursing Camp for high schoolers on topics such as CPR, bleeding control and



Alexis Wagner

Alexis Wagner

Alexis is a member of the Newnan 2023 cohort. She helped with tours of the nursing building, including the Experiential Learning Center. One of the groups she toured was HOSA-Future Health Professionals, a global student-led organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. She also assisted with a Meet & Greet at the Newnan Campus.



Andrew Smith

received this honor in Spring 2023 and other times as well. Noah assisted with the Spring UWG Showcase in Nursing and at the STEM Day Nursing information table.



Noah Seagle

Nursing Well Represented at UWG Alumni Awards Celebration



2023 UWG Nursing Alumni Award recipients (l-r) Dr. Kelly Dyar, Dr. Oliver Duah, Dr. Kathryn Grams, Raequon Jones and Sydney Francis.

The University of West Georgia Alumni Association presented annual achievement awards at its 46th Annual Alumni Awards Celebration as part of its Alumni Weekend in Spring Semester.

Five individuals from Nursing - Dr. Oliver Duah, Dr. Kelly Dyar, Sydney Francis, Dr. Kathryn Grams and Raequon Jones - received awards.

Dr. Oliver Duah J. Owen Moore Faculty Award

The J. Owen Moore Faculty/Staff award is presented annually to a faculty member, either retired or current, and a staff member, either retired or current. It recognizes service to the

university, students and the community beyond what is required in job duties.

After graduation with his BSN, Dr. Duah's career achievements have been many. He worked as staff nurse at Tanner Medical Center/Carrollton. He quickly became a pillar on the Medical-Surgical Unit. In 2012, he worked as a team member to implement protocols for accreditation as a Center for Orthopedic Excellence.

In 2016, Dr. Duah became a clinical instructor for THSSON and accepted a full-time teaching position at the University of West Georgia after graduating with his MSN degree. He has since served on various committees at the



School of Nursing including Service Learning and Technology Fees at the University level. He began his PhD studies in 2019 and received his PhD degree in December 2022.

Nursing Well Represented

at UWG Alumni Awards Celebration (cont)

Dr. Duah (cont)

In Spring 2023, he was appointed THSSON Dean for Undergraduate Programs & Assistant Professor. He is fully involved in the community serving as a youth mentor, an ordained elder, and a health promotion and education speaker. During the COVID Pandemic, Dr. Duah was instrumental in organizing free health screenings and COVID education to West African immigrants.



Dr. Kelly Dyar Achievement Award in Nursing

Each UWG college may nominate Achievement Award recipients.

Dr. Dyar's professional service has many components. Highlighted in this nomination is her service to UWG, the community, and her profession. Of particular note and value to the School of Nursing is her leadership roles that take place through upfront and behind the scenes service to the school. For example, in the role of Director of Inquiry and Scholarship, Dr. Dyar worked closely with faculty to promote professional development.

In this role, Dr. Dyar works tirelessly to mentor faculty in publications and seeking grant funding. This functional role is critical to the strategic priorities of the UWG and the SON.

Dr. Dyar is also a longtime leader in the Georgia Association for Nursing Education, Inc. (GANE), previously serving as President. She is active in the Nephrology Nurses Association at the local and national levels. She also was a leader in getting COVID-19 vaccines into arms as a volunteer with the District 3 and District 4 public health departments as well as the vaccine clinics hosted by UWG.

Thriving Under 30 Awards

The Thriving Under 30 Awards recognize young alumni who are under the age of 30 and have made a significant impact in their career industry while exhibiting dedication to UWG and representing the University as well.

The SON had two recipients of this award, Sydney Francis and Raequon Jones.



Sydney Francis

Sydney Francis has excelled as an RN in the most challenging times of the nursing profession. Sydney entered nursing school right before the pandemic and graduated right in the middle of it.

She has thrived as a staff nurse on the front lines, serving as a registered nurse in medical oncology at Emory University Hospital.

Nursing Well Represented

at UWG Alumni Awards Celebration (cont)

Sydney Francis (cont)

This position required that she demonstrate superior assessment skills and recognize the impact of nursing care on patient outcomes.

She currently is an RN in the Infusion Center at Emory where she is responsible for delivering safe, dependable and effective care to the oncology population.



Raequon Jones

Rae Jones graduated in 2017 and was immediately admitted into Emory University Hospital's Nurse Residency Program, a competitive program that identifies the best and the brightest for development as a professional registered nurse.

Emory is a magnet status hospital, the highest level of recognition for nursing care that a hospital can receive.

Rae also became a traveling nurse on the front lines of the COVID pandemic.

On top of these achievements, he also was admitted into Augusta University's Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiology doctoral program where he maintains a GPA of 3.87 and will graduate in 2024.

Dr. Kathryn Grams Honorary Alumna

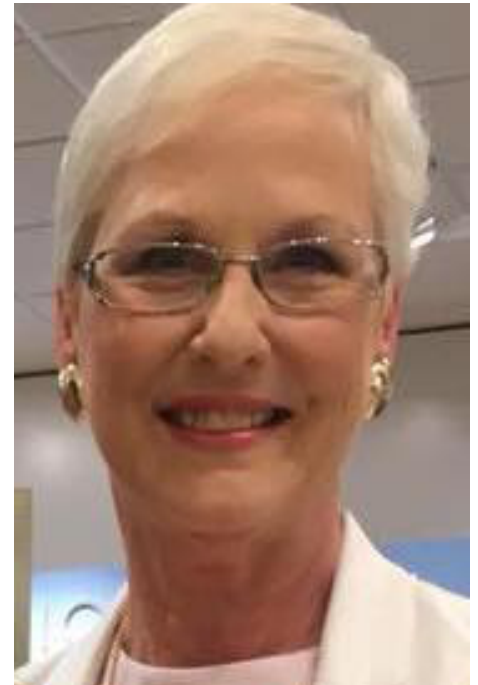
This award is given annually to non-alumni who have demonstrated faithful and distinguished service to the University of West Georgia and/or the Alumni Association.

This award seeks to identify and honor non-alumni supporters who are critical to the success of the Institution.

Dr. Grams was founding dean of the school. She retired in 2014 as a professor emeritus.

Words cannot express just what an excellent and extraordinary friend and supporter to UWG and the School of Nursing that Dr. Grams is.

So many times, she is asked for her advice and wisdom and



she never hesitates to share her knowledge.

Her support has made all the difference for the School of Nursing to continue to be successful after her tenure as Dean.

Dr. Grams' love for all things UWG comes through so clearly in every way every time people talk to her. There is no one worthier to be an honorary alum than Dr. Kathryn Grams.

For a complete list of all 2023 UWG Alumni Achievement Award recipients and for information on the 2024 nomination process, visit the Alumni website.

UWG, Georgia Highlands College Sign Partnership Agreement



Front Row (l-r): Dr. Mike Hobbs, GHC President; Dr. Brendan Kelly, UWG President. Back Row (l-r): Dr. Paula Stover, GHC Director of Nursing; Dr. Lisa Jellum, GHC School of Health Sciences Dean; Dr. Sarah Coakley, GHC Provost and Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Jon Preston, UWG Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Jenny Schuessler, UWG Tanner Health System School of Nursing Dean; and Dr. Sally Richter, UWG Associate Dean of Nursing Graduate Programs

by Miranda Pepe

Leaders from the [University of West Georgia](#) and [Georgia Highlands College](#) recently signed a partnership agreement to provide a seamless pathway for nursing students between the two institutions.

“As we endeavor to [curate a first-choice university](#), we are proud to cultivate a community of professionals in the healthcare industry,” said Dr. Brendan B. Kelly, UWG’s [President](#).

“Through strategic partnerships like this, we are able to advance our students’ portfolios with the opportunities they need to excel. By leveraging this mutually beneficial collaboration with Georgia Highlands College, we will enable aspiring nurses to thrive in their in-demand careers and

make meaningful contributions to the healthcare system.”

Through the partnership, students who complete the requirements of the [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#) from Georgia Highlands College will benefit from a seamless transition into the [Master of Science in Nursing](#) offered at UWG’s prestigious [Tanner Health System School of Nursing](#), reducing the amount of time required for students to obtain their master’s degrees.

“The heart of our mission at GHC is to provide access to a high-quality college education from the [University System of Georgia](#) that prepares students for a career and to pursue higher college degree programs after GHC,” said Dr. Mike Hobbs, President of Georgia Highlands College. “This partnership with

UWG is yet another way our college jointly provides students access to high-demand careers in our region while elevating their role in the healthcare sector as they work.”

As stated in the signed agreement, both institutions are dedicated to offering enhanced educational opportunities to students that complement programs at UWG and GHC. Students will have a streamlined path to enter UWG’s MSN program upon graduating from GHC.

Additionally, accelerated students will have the opportunity to enroll in UWG MSN courses during their final baccalaureate semester at GHC to further encourage their educational journey.

Collaborative Partnership Between the University of West Georgia and Berry College

In Fall 2023, the University of West Georgia Tanner Health System School of Nursing (THSSON) entered into a collaborative partnership with Berry College to support the enrollment of students recommended by Berry College for the UWG THSSON MSN program.

As part of a grant received from the Georgia Healthcare Workforce, Berry College received \$150,000 to support tuition and fees for students to attend the MSN Nurse Educator Track at UWG.

In a collaborative agreement, Berry College provided these funds to the UWG Foundation to support up to 10 MSN nurse educator track students, who met the admission requirement for the 35 credit hours required for the program.

Fall Semester 2023, the THSSON was excited to admit eight students supported by the Berry College Workforce Collaborative Scholarship.

One student, Camille Bates, expressed her gratitude for this opportunity, "My dream is to be an undergraduate nursing professor. Many great students are turned away from nursing school admissions because of a shortage of instructors."



Camille Bates

"It is an honor to serve as a nurse and I want to give back to the nursing profession by helping educate the next generation of future nurses," Camille said.

"Berry College has given me the gift to pursue my MSN at the University of West Georgia. Because of Berry, I'll accomplish my dreams while helping nursing students reach theirs. This experience is life-changing in so many ways and I will be forever grateful for this opportunity."

The partnership between the University of West Georgia THSSON and Berry College will be of great benefit for the career development of these students as well as contribute to meeting the nursing faculty shortage being experienced nationwide.

The success of these students is sure to be a success for UWG, Berry College and nursing students alike.

Nursing Students Make a Difference



Twelve UWG THS School of Nursing students and two teaching faculty members traveled to Costa Rica in May to assist in meeting healthcare needs in impoverished communities.

The 12 students - Hannah Allen, Ally Arp, Casey Black, Trinity Byrom, Jordan Chambers, Maya Fenderson, Stanesha Ford, Kristie Gardner, Amy Gomez Camilo, Bailey Murphy, Janet Nichols and Tamara Young - visited one rural community and two urban communities to serve these vulnerable populations. They set up field clinics, seeing patients with acute healthcare needs. They completed six clinic days, seeing approximately 100 people.

Before leaving for Costa Rica, the teaching faculty members - Dr. Kelly Dyar and Dr. Oliver Duah - received a letter from the Asociacion DiaVida, the Costa Rican Association Fights Diabetes

group. DiaVida requested assistance at their clinic. Therefore, the SON team assisted this population as well.

The group also visited an elementary school where the nursing students did service learning projects to teach the school students. There were approximately 90 children in grades one-five.

One group taught healthy snacking while another group taught oral hygiene and gave out toothbrushes and toothpaste kits to all the children. Still another group taught exercise and health.

The nursing students gave and received so much more than meeting the healthcare needs of the children and people they met.

"Today truly fed my soul!" said Stanesha Ford. "I was able to uplift a young girl who approached me saying that she was being bullied at school because of her dark skin tone."

Janet Nichols said the nursing study abroad enriched her knowledge as well as her soul. *(continued on next page)*



Stanesha Ford "making a difference" in Costa Rica.

Nursing Students Make a Difference (cont)

"The most memorable part of the trip for me was having the opportunity to deliver care to residents that face challenges in accessing healthcare services in their communities," Janet said.



One of the reasons Jordan Chambers joined the study abroad program was to gain knowledge by participating in a different healthcare environment. He did that and also added confidence to his already learned skills.

"I felt very gratified to be able to use the knowledge and abilities I had acquired in the lecture/clinical lab settings to actual patient care scenarios."

Study abroad also contributed to the students awareness of likenesses people have.

"I shared a similar connection with a mom during one of our clinics," Kristie Gardner said.



"The trip significantly impacted me, and I am thankful for the humbling experience I received from visiting this country."



For nursing students considering the study abroad program, Tamara Young said, "I have not been the same since (in a good way) and I have more confidence in myself and my abilities as a soon to be registered nurse. This is a great opportunity, and I would recommend going on this trip for anyone who doesn't mind learning and giving back to those in need."

"Despite our language barrier, we were united by a mom's heart," Kristie said.

Some students were unsure as to whether study abroad was something they should do.

"During the trip, I had many moments where I knew I was in the right place, and my love and passion for nursing grew even more," Ally Arp said.



MSN Capstone Projects: Publications Highlighting Innovations in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Education

Leading educators are grappling with the challenges of how to maintain diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on campuses nationwide. Nowhere is this question more pressing than in nursing education, where promoting DEI is more than academic. The importance of building a strong and diverse nursing workforce capable of delivering quality, culturally humble, equitable care has a profound impact on patient outcomes and public health.

Reflecting the current dialogue and debate among educational researchers, thought leaders in health care, legal scholars, and policymakers, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, the respected peer-reviewed scholarly journal published by the [National League for Nursing](#), has devoted the September/October 2023 edition to an in-depth examination of diversity, equity and inclusion in nursing education.

With an emphasis on evidence-based actions, the issue explores transformational and innovative strategies for instruction in academic and clinical settings. These provide tools to dismantle systemic inequities and institutional racism to advance social,

environmental and economic justice. (Adapted from NLN News Release. 09/21/2023)

Christi Jordan, assistant professor and a 2022 MSN program graduate, was among the authors published in this special edition.

Her capstone project, *Using a Flipped Classroom and Role-Play to Introduce Nursing Students to LGBTQIA+ Patient Care* is an innovative approach to teaching nursing students about the healthcare needs of LGBTQIA+ patients. This approach included introducing students to patient care strategies prior to class via online videos. Once in the classroom, Jordan reinforced these strategies with role-play and interactive discussion.

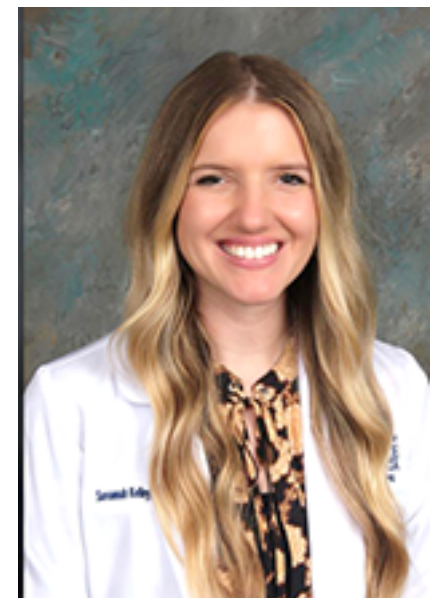


Christi Jordan

Please see the article for Jordan's publication.

Further, Savannah Kelley, a 2023 MSN program graduate, conducted a capstone project also addressing innovative methods of preparing students to provide care to diverse populations. Her capstone project has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Nursing Education*, a prestigious, peer-reviewed, scholarly nursing education journal. The title of her publication will be *Incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within Community Health Nursing Simulation*.

The publication date is not yet set, but we eagerly await the sharing of this important work!



Savannah Kelley

U.S. News & World Report Ranks Online Nursing Graduate Program Second in State

By Julie Lineback

The University of West Georgia was once again recognized as the state's leader in online MBA education, as it maintained momentum in this year's annual rankings by U.S. News & World Report. UWG tied in the category with Mercer University in Macon.

Overall online bachelor's programs also received a boost, as UWG has risen to No. 2 in the state, only falling behind the University of Georgia.

In addition, the publication recognized UWG on its lists of Best Online Education graduate degree, Best Online Nursing graduate degree and Best Online Computer Science graduate degree – the two latter of which also placed No. 2 and No. 3 statewide, respectively.

"These latest rankings confirm the steady rise of UWG's profile as a leader of online education, and what's most significant is we're excelling not just in one area, but across multiple disciplines," said Dr. Brendan Kelly, UWG President.

"Ever since UWG began offering online instruction in 1997, we have worked to ensure the virtual experience at our university parallels the in-person experience, with academic and student support.

Surveys for the bachelor's programs ranked more than 350 institutions on the categories of engagement, services and technology, faculty credentials and training, and expert opinion. The surveys for graduate degree programs measured those four categories as well as student excellence.

U.S. News employs thoroughly vetted academic data from surveys and reliable third-party sources to calculate each ranking, along with user feedback, discussions with schools and higher education experts, literature reviews, trends in existing data, availability of new data, and engaging with deans and institutional researchers at higher education conferences. Only the top institutions are then included in the rankings.

"Our accessible and flexible online education is characterized by high-quality methods, rigorous academic content, and engaging activities that provide our students with the knowledge they need for a competitive advantage when they enter the workforce," said Dr. Jon Preston, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at UWG. "It's a testament to the outstanding education our faculty provides to our students every day of the academic year."

UWG also serves as the operational home to the [University System of Georgia's eCampus](#), a service unit that includes [eCore](#) and [eMajor](#) and partners with USG institutions to provide quality post-secondary online degrees that address the needs of industries throughout the country and the world.

University of West Georgia Named a Top School for Online Nursing Education



The University of West Georgia has been named one of today's best schools for online higher education in healthcare by EduMed.org. UWG's online nursing programs have earned top honors for their overall quality, affordability and commitment to student success.

UWG placed 33rd.

"Our rankings showcase the schools giving future nurses and allied health professionals the best chance to succeed from day one in the classroom to day one on the job," said Wes Harris, outreach coordinator for EduMed.org. "This starts with low-cost tuition, but also includes academic counseling, career placement and other key resources that students need to graduate and get hired."

EduMed.org's rankings come at a time when the demand for trained healthcare professionals is on the rise. According to Mercer, a global consulting leader in healthcare, the U.S. will see millions of vacancies in critical healthcare positions by 2025.

Nurse practitioner, nursing assistant and home health aide roles stand to experience some of the greatest shortages over the next three years and beyond.

"One key to solving the healthcare shortage is making higher education more accessible," said Harris. "Online programs open the door to students who may not be able to commit to a campus-based program while working, or to commute to a classroom at all. Each school in our rankings has made online learning a priority."

EduMed.org researched and analyzed more than 7,700 accredited schools using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and from the schools themselves.

The website's data science team then applied a proprietary algorithm to rank all qualifying schools for each healthcare discipline. Primary data points include:

- Academic counseling services
- Career placement services
- Student-to-faculty ratio
- Tuition
- Percent of students receiving school-based financial aid
- Amount of school-based aid per student

To be eligible, a school must hold active regional accreditation and have at least one partially online program in the ranking subject. Just 8 percent of U.S. postsecondary institutions earned a ranking position.

Pi Nu Honored at Sigma 47th Biennial Convention

Sigma, the international honor society of nursing, awarded the UWG Pi Nu chapter with a regional excellence award at its Biennial Convention.

Pi Nu will be listed on the Sigma website for the 2021-2023 Showcase of Regional Excellence Recipients.

The criteria for these awards changed during the 2021-2023 biennium. What was previously a presidential call to action transitioned to be an organizational call to action with influence from the Board of Directors to better support each individual region.

Sigma is the only honor society for nursing. In 1922, six nurses founded Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, today known as Sigma, at the Indiana University Training School for Nurses, which is now the Indiana University School of Nursing, in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. The founders chose the name from the Greek words storgé, thárros, and timé, meaning love, courage, and honor. Sigma became incorporated in 1985 and is a nonprofit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax status in the United States.

Some of the benefits of Sigma membership include:

- Free nursing continuing education professional development courses
- Career connections to shape the member's path
- Free journals and member publication
- Invaluable conversations

The UWG Sigma Pi Nu Chapter inducts new members annually at the end of spring semester.

Eighteen members were inducted this spring:

- Tiffany Downing
- Jaime Haas
- Jessica Harper |
- Laura Hart
- Charmaine Hutchinson

- Chassidy Hyde
- Emiline Jefares
- Lauryn King
- Laurie Lopez
- Ayn McLaurin
- Ashly Moody
- Adrienne North
- Ijeoma Okite
- Kelin Price
- Bryce Reckner
- Danielle Szajdek
- Sandra Vargovich
- Alexis Wagner

For more information about the Sigma Pi Nu chapter of Sigma, contact :

- Dr. Katie Morales, President (kmorales@westga.edu)
- Dr. Laura Phillips, Past President (lphillips@westga.edu)



New Faculty and Staff Join SON

The UWG THS School of Nursing added two new faculty and three new Experiential Learning Center nurse educators to its roster this year.

The new faculty include:
- **Tanya Naguszewski**, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor. Dr. Naguszewski brings 15 years teaching experience



Tanya Naguszewski

with her as well as publications in such nursing journals as the Journal of Nursing Education and Practice. She is currently teaching NURS-3100 Pathophysiology & Pharmacology II and NURS-4302 Clinical Practice IV.

- **Ashly Moody**, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor. Ashly has 15 years of nursing experience, five years teaching experience and she just received her MSN from the UWG THS School of Nursing in May 2023. She is currently teaching NURS-4301 Clinical Practice III.

Three new nurse educators round out the additions to the SON roster.

- **Chelsey Copeland** brings with her seven years of nursing experience.



Samantha Swafford

- **Samantha Swafford** has 15 years of nursing and
- **Elishe Carey** has two years nursing.

All share their knowledge and skills in the Experiential Learning Center to nursing students.



Ashly Moody



Elishe Carey



Chelsey Copeland

NLN Foundation Announces 2023 Awards

Advanced degree nursing students have been awarded a total of \$96,300 in financial support through the annual competitive scholarship program run by the [NLN Foundation for Nursing Education](#). These include a dozen winners of up to \$8,000 each of the NLN Foundation for Nursing Education Faculty scholarships.

“We are proud to continue the NLN Foundation’s tradition of scholarship support to deserving students enrolled in advanced degree programs, committed to pursuing careers in nursing education. They represent our future, fulfilling the National League for Nursing’s mission to prepare a culturally humble, diverse nursing workforce to deliver outstanding and equitable care,” said NLN Foundation Chair Patrick Robinson, PhD, RN, ACRN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, vice president of nursing at Pacific College of Health and Science.

“Expanding the ranks of nurse faculty remains an urgent priority to open the pipeline for more qualified applicants to gain acceptance to nursing programs at all levels of higher education. This will help address the persistent shortage in the nursing workforce,” said NLN President and CEO Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN.

“For this reason, the National League for Nursing remains dedicated to funding scholarship opportunities for deserving and diverse candidates pursuing careers in nursing education and specialized patient care. We thank the generosity of donors to the NLN Foundation for Nursing Education and our partner organizations, like the Health Carousel Foundation, for helping to make such support possible.”

2023 NLN Foundation for Nursing Education Faculty Scholarship Awards

The NLN Foundation Scholarship Awards Program supports diverse nurses committed to careers in academic nursing education. Awards of up to \$8,000 are made to nurses enrolled in accredited master’s or doctoral programs and who have completed at least one year of advanced academic study toward their degrees.

·Heather Walsh, MSN RN PCNS-BC CHSE CPN, The George Washington University

·Robbin Guynn, RN, BSN, MSN, CMSRN, Regis College

·Lacey Cross, MSN, FNP-BC, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

·Caitlin Nye (She/Her), MSN, RN, NPD-BC, CHSE, SUNY at Buffalo, School of Nursing

·Paige Randall, MS, RN, CEN, CNE, Duke University School of Nursing

·Cori Heier, MSN, RN, CNE, CHSE, CNRN, University of Kansas

·Rachael Salguero, MSN, RN-BC, CNEcl, Endicott College

·**Tabitha Quillen, EdD(c), MSN, RN, CNE, CNEcl, University of West Georgia**

·Deborah Toddes, MSN, RN, CNE, CNEcl, Chamberlain University College of Nursing

·Huifang Cheng, MSN, RN, APN, Seton Hall University

·Irvin Ong, EdD, MHPed, RN, Johns Hopkins University

·**Tonya Herring, EdD(c), MSN, RN, CNE, University of West Georgia — Funded by the Pamela Jane Nye Working Nurse Scholarship**

For information about the NLN Foundation for Nursing Education, visit [NLN.org/Foundation](https://www.nln.org/foundation).

Article from: <https://bit.ly/3LDTexM>

Kaylyn Fairchild Comes Full Circle

When her baby brother was undergoing a liver transplant at the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA), little did six-year-old Kaylyn Fairchild know that in 16 years she would be beginning her career as a newly graduating nurse in that same transplant unit at CHOA.

In 2006, six-year-old Kaylyn was living with her parents and siblings in Maui, Hawaii when her youngest brother, Kevin was born. Kevin was soon diagnosed with a condition known as biliary atresia and he would need a liver transplant.

After researching the most well-equipped hospital for this type of procedure on an infant, Kaylyn's parents decided on CHOA.

"So, we picked up and moved to Georgia," Kaylyn said. "Unfortunately, Kevin had many complications that caused his stay in the hospital to be very long.

"During this time in my life, although I was young, I was able to see how much of an impact the kindness of his nurses and care team had on myself and my family. Because of this, I have always hoped that one day I would also be able to make an impact on someone's life and I chose to go into the field of nursing."

Kaylyn graduated from UWG THS School of Nursing in December 2022 with a job offer in the Transplant Stepdown Unit at CHOA.

"It is virtually unheard of for a newly graduating nurse to be hired in a transplant unit," said Jenny Schuessler, dean, UWG THS School of Nursing.

From an avid six-year-old watching and learning from caring nurses at CHOA's transplant unit, Kaylyn has come "full circle" to her career.



"I feel extremely humbled to now have the opportunity to pass on that same kindness that was shown to us and so much excitement for the future of my nursing journey!"

And Kevin? He received his new liver October 27, 2006 and today, he is a very happy and healthy 16-year-old, who celebrated with his family his sister's graduation and new career!

Congratulations to all the Fairchilds!

UWG Communications and Marketing contributed to this article.

Paving the Road to Nursing



Drew Barron, a BSN Spring 2023 graduate, took an unusual path to nursing.

In fact, the UWG President Dr. Brendan Kelly shared Drew's story of overcoming obstacles through tenacity and with the supportive community of the Tanner Health System School of Nursing. Drew has faced more than his share of adversity.

"I have had a moderate to severe speech impediment for as long as I can remember. I had always wanted to work in the medical field, but because of my dysfluency, I would put aside goals and dreams in fear of failure. Additionally, I have had a lifetime of people openly

reinforcing what they perceived as my limitations, continuously reminding me of what I can and cannot do," Drew said.

Drew wanted to enter the medical field, but a fear of failure left him stunted. So, after high school, Drew spent the next decade doing various jobs, such as a forklift driver, transmission lineman, and paving supervisor for the state prison system.

"I genuinely became a jack of all trades but a master of none because I believed that I was not college material," Drew added.

Drew continued with his life. He married and started a family. He watched his cousin become a registered nurse and witnessed firsthand the unique difference that a nurse has the capacity to make in people's lives.

With encouragement from his wife, Drew enrolled as a post-traditional nursing student at UWG.

"My wife has been my biggest cheerleader throughout our marriage. In her eyes, my only limitations are the ones I have set for myself. She has always encouraged me to pursue something I find meaningful and helped me overcome my false beliefs related to my speech," Drew said.

Drew found all his previous jobs – from the ones dealing

with CEOs of multibillion-dollar companies to those working with individuals serving lengthy sentences in the prison system – set him up for immense success in college.

Those circumstances opened a door for improved communication skills and empathy, which Drew says have proven to be critical abilities when relating to a wide range of patient populations.

Drew graduated with his Bachelor of Science in Nursing and has begun his career in the Intensive Care Unit of Tanner Health System Villa Rica.

Drew's journey has shown that it takes a high level of self-belief, determination, and grit to be successful

"My path to becoming a University of West Georgia Nursing School graduate is unorthodox. I often tell others I wish I had pursued this earlier. However, if given a chance to go back and do things differently, I do not think I would. This journey has also taught me that gratification seldom comes from what you can do for yourself but, more often, from what you can do for others."

From Undergraduate to MSN and Everything In Between

Many nurses are part of experiences that other people only read in the news. Dana O'Neil is one of those nurses who took part in not one but three such incidents.

"At the end of my junior year (nursing school in Massachusetts), I was a medical volunteer with my mom, who is an ER nurse. We were volunteering at the finish line during the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. It was devastating. And I didn't know if I could finish my semester. But it was because of the overwhelming care, support, and compassion from my nursing professors that I finished the semester and ultimately the program. It was after that whole experience and feeling just how influential and important nursing professors can be that made me want to become a nurse educator."

Dana moved to Virginia and began working in the emergency department of UVA Health. There, she became one of the "go-to" nurses for troubleshooting.

"I was working at the UVA emergency department when the August 12th Unite the Right Nazi rally occurred.

"It was from my experiences with the bombing and how my professors made me feel that allowed me to support and care for my friends and coworkers

who were devastated by this experience. Being this resource further solidified my decision to become a nurse educator."

Dana decided to get her Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and it was the UWG THS School of Nursing she chose.

"When looking for an MSN nurse educator program, UWG checked all the boxes: I appreciated that UWG's program had a fully online asynchronous format, allowing for flexibility while working full time. The application process was streamlined; I met the admission requirements, and I didn't have to take statistics again! Another major selling point for me was receiving in-state tuition as a fully online student."

"This showed me that UWG wanted their education and programs to be affordable and accessible, making me already feel supported while starting this journey. UWG was the only program I applied to and I couldn't be happier with the experiences and knowledge I've gained."

Life sometimes gets in the way of our plans and that's what happened to Dana.

"In May 2020 while enrolled as a graduate student and working as a nurse in the cardiac catheterization lab, I suffered a shoulder injury while

doing chest compressions that resulted in surgery a year later.

"Because of an expected six-month recovery, I had to postpone my final two semesters, restarting the following fall. Postponing for an entire year, though, allowed me to have practicum experiences exceeding my expectations."

While studying for her MSN and working, "one of my worst fears came true. A school shooting occurred on a bus full of students, resulting in the loss of three 3rd year students. At the time, my practicum experience involved clinical instructing 3rd year students and some knew the victims."

"After all of my experiences, after being the same age as my students when I was at the Boston bombing, after being welcomed and accepted into the academic side of UVA, everything came together and I was able to care for and support my students when they needed it the most."

Dana graduated May 2023.

"Graduating with my MSN has required perseverance in ways I never imagined. There were times when I just downright wanted to quit. But it was support from my assigned caring group (now friends), my UWG professors and my husband that I proudly graduated."

Nursing Students are Athletes Too!



The UWG THS School of Nursing graduated four nursing student athletes spring semester (l-r) Kristyn Nix, Softball; Hillary Resendiz, Soccer; Kailaini Serapion, Women's Cross Country; and Danielle Szajdek, Cheerleading.

Apply for MSN and EdD in Nursing Education

Classes start in the Fall. For more information, visit MSN and EdD in Nursing Education.

Ready to advance your nursing education?

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