

UWG Newsletter

Tanner Health System School of Nursing

In this issue:

- Welcome
- EdD Graduates are Published Authors
- Faculty News
- UWG Celebrates 40 Years of Nursing
- To Give is to Receive
- 2016 Daisy Award

Welcome From The Dean

Welcome to the annual on-line newsletter of the School of Nursing. To say that the last year has been an exciting one in the School of Nursing would be an understatement!! All programs are performing well. We have approximately 500 students in our professional programs -40 in our

EdD program, 100 in our MSN program, 80 in our RN to BSN program and 310 in our BSN program. The first wave of graduates from our EdD program is underway. Four of our six graduates have already had their dissertations accepted for publication in prestigious nursing journals! You can read more about these authors in the article “EdD Graduates are Published Authors.” With our EdD program and large MSN educator track, we have established a reputation as educators of the nurse educator. Our graduate programs have been rated in the top 45 of online graduate programs by the US News and World Report for three consecutive years!!

The transition of our RN to BSN program to 100% on line took place in the Fall of 2016. This program continues to be a strong program dedicated to assisting practicing RNs returning to school to complete their BSN. The BSN program continues to enjoy great outcomes including an NCLEX pass rate of 90% this year and excellent employment rates. We have admitted the largest classes ever – 140 students in both 2015 and 2016. The program is in its fourth year of a new concept based curriculum. As evidence of the outstanding nature of the curriculum, a manuscript, written by the undergraduate faculty describing the new concept based curriculum, has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Nursing Education – the nursing journal with the highest impact factor of all nursing education journals in the U.S.

As part of our Strategic Plan, faculty have identified community engagement priorities, including the concept of global service. Through the tireless effort of several faculty, twelve undergraduate students, three faculty and two community volunteers traveled to Quito Ecuador for a study abroad experience. You can read more about it in the article, “To Give is to Receive.”

Our thirty full time faculty are beyond compare!! Among our faculty, we have those who have been recognized as outstanding alumni of their university, including an outstanding UWG alumni. We have three faculty who have been selected as on-site evaluators for national nursing program accrediting agencies. We have a NLN CNE commissioner and the Vice President for the Philippine Nurse Association of Georgia. Our faculty also include a Fellow of the Sigma Theta Tau International Experienced Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy and a recipient of the NLN Nurse Scholar Award. Two faculty are finalists for the Georgia March of Dimes Nurse of the Year! I could continue on about the accomplishments of our faculty forever, but have limited myself to this one paragraph. See the articles “2016 Daisy Awards” and “Faculty News” for the latest information about our faculty.

And finally, we are celebrating 40 years of UWG nurses in 2016. Part of this celebration took place at a special event in the School in April. With us that day were nurses from a number of ASN, BSN, RN to BSN, MSN and EdD graduates from over the years. It was truly a great group of people to celebrate our 40th anniversary with!! Please see the article about this awesome event! Here's to another 40 years of School of Nursing faculty, staff and students living our mission everyday...academic excellence in a caring environment!!

EdD Graduates are Published Authors

The School of Nursing simultaneously admitted its fifth cohort of EdD students and began graduating students from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cohorts. Our EdD program, an innovative program that prepares nurses for the academic role, is the only one of its kind in Georgia and has students from all over the country. Many qualified applicants are denied admission to schools of nursing annually, in large part due to lack of nursing faculty. This program is designed to address the nationwide shortage of nurses, by increasing the number of nurses prepared for the academic role. This program helps to ensure our colleges and universities have experienced teachers preparing the next generation of practitioners.

To date, the EdD Program in Nursing Education boasts six graduates. Of those six, four have had their dissertations accepted for publication. This is a testament to the excellent research being done by our graduates under the guidance of faculty. Dr. Jaime Carter, the first graduate of our EdD program (and pictured here receiving her hood) has had her study, “The Effectiveness of Unfolding Case Studies on ADN Nursing Students’ Level of Knowledge and Critical Thinking Skills” published in Teaching and Learning in Nursing. Dr. Susan Welch was Dr. Carter’s dissertation adviser. Dr. Sherika Derico’s work, “The Use of Phenomenology in Nursing Education: and Integrative Review” has been accepted for publication in Nursing Education Perspectives. Dr. Derico’s chair was Dr. Rita Mahmoud. “Taking the First Step: Choosing a Nurse Residency Program”, is the research done by Dr. Jimmy Hall. Dr. Mary Bishop was Dr. Hall’s adviser. His paper has been accepted by American Nurse Today. Dr. Ann Elliot, has had her paper, “Professional Values Competency Evaluation for Students Enrolled in a Concept-Based Curriculum”, accepted for publication in the Journal of Nursing Education. Dr. Elliot’s committee chair was Dr. Michelle Byrne.

Congratulations to all of these EdD graduates! The bar has been set very high by these outstanding nurse researchers!!!



Faculty News

Retirements of Long-Standing, Beloved Associate Deans

The Tanner Health System School of Nursing at UWG has experienced phenomenal growth in the last few years in virtually any category that could be named: enrollments, buildings, programs, faculty, student scholarships, faculty scholarly productivity, fundraising, and reputation. This growth has occurred under the leadership of two extraordinary people: Dr. Cindy Epps and Dr. Laurie Ware.



Dr. Epps, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor in 1997, rose through the faculty academic ranks to Professor in 2007 and was appointed Associate Dean in 2008. As chair of the Undergraduate Program Committee, Dr. Epps led in the development and implementation of an innovative concept based curriculum and was instrumental in providing the support needed for faculty and facility development of our world-class simulation program. She is known for her sense of humor, integrity and willingness to go the extra mile for students and colleagues. Dr. Epps has announced her retirement effective December 15, 2016. She will be sorely missed.



Dr. Ware, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, came to the University of West Georgia in 2001 as the inaugural Nursing Graduate Program Coordinator. She was appointed Assistant Dean in 2009 and Associate Dean in 2011. Through her leadership, the graduate programs were developed from the ground up. Today, the School boasts a strong MSN with three tracks: nurse educator, clinical nurse leader and health systems leader and the EdD in Nursing Education. The exponential growth of our graduate programs are due in large part to Dr.

Ware's transformational leadership. Dr. Ware is known for setting high standards within a student-centered approach. She will be greatly missed when she retires in June of 2017.

New Faculty

This semester, we welcome three new faculty members to the Tanner Health System School of Nursing, Dr. Laura Caramanica, RN, CENP, FACHE, FAAN; Patty Moran, MSN, RN; and Dr. Delene Volkert, RN, CNE. They come to us after long and successful careers in the field of nursing, each of them bringing unique experiences with them.



Dr. Laura Caramanica has spent the last 25 years as an experienced nurse executive in leadership positions in Georgia, New York, and Connecticut. As a Fellow in the Academy of Nursing and in the Academy of Health Care Executives, she is certified in nursing administration by both the American Organization of Nurse Executives and the American Nurses Association.

She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut (PhD); Columbia University/Teacher's College (MEd); University of Bridgeport (BS); and Hartford Hospital School of Nursing (RN).

One of the things that interested her in UWG THSSON was the impressive caliber of both the faculty and students at UWG. She worked closely with them in her last role as CNO at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital.

"The CNL role is the newest role in nursing in 50 years and we are fortunate in Georgia to have faculty credentialed to educate these new nurse providers who are transforming care at the bedside and ensuring the delivery of

safe quality care,” Caramanica said.



Patty Moran has been a registered nurse for 30 years, with the majority of her career in community health. She has been teaching in academia since receiving her Masters in Nursing Education from UWG in 2011. And in December, she will be graduating with her Doctor of Nursing Practice in Health Systems Administration from Samford University.

“While attending the Tanner Health System School of Nursing, I experienced a learning environment that was caring, holistic, and professional,” she said.

“I love teaching and I feel extremely blessed to be a part of the nursing faculty here at UWG.”



Dr. Delene Volkert started her nursing career as an associate degree nurse in 2002. With a clinical background primarily in home health/hospice and nursing management, she has also worked in the emergency room, on a medical-surgical floor, as a surgical nurse, and subbed as a school nurse.

After completing her RN to BSN in 2010, she immediately started an MSN from Walden, which she completed in 2012. She then began her doctoral program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and earned her PhD this past summer.

The primary thing that made her so interested in THSSON programs was the focus on caring. “As a former hospice nurse, I don’t know that we focus enough on caring within academic setting,” she said. “That is why I was initially intrigued by UWG. When I came to campus to interview, I was impressed by the warmth and friendliness of the faculty and staff here.”

We also have three faculty in their second year with us that joined the THSSON in 2015. Assistant Clinical Professors Connie Barbour, Melissa Downs and Kelly Dyar have already brought a variety of experiences and expertise to the School of Nursing team. Dr. Barbour teaches pathophysiology, pharmacology and health assessment as well as health care of the client and clinical courses. Ms. Downs teaches in the clinical and professional concepts courses and is the leader of our first Dedicated Education Unit. Pathophysiology, pharmacology, health care of the client and professional concepts are taught by Mrs. Dyar, who is also an EdD candidate in our doctoral program.

We are fortunate to have had two very successful faculty recruitment years. We welcome these new colleagues and embrace the experience and knowledge they bring with them. So glad they Went West!!



Dr. Connie Barbour



Melissa Downs



Kelly Dyar

Promotions and New Appointments

We are pleased to announce the promotion to Associate Professor and tenure of Dr. Susan Welch. Dr. Welch joined the faculty in 2006 as an instructor. She currently serves as the Director of the EdD program and has a strong publication record in the area of the scholarship of teaching and learning. We are also pleased to announce the appointments of Dr. Tammy McClenny and Dr. Connie Barbour to tenure track assistant professor positions. Drs. McClenny and Barbour are both graduates of our EdD program and were members of the none – tenure track faculty. They were selected

through a national search and found to be the best qualified candidates from a competitive pool. Dr. McClenny serves as the director of the RN to BSN program. Her dissertation research focused on high-stakes testing from a student perspective. Dr. Barbour's dissertation research applied Q-Methodology, a complex qualitative and quantitative approach, to study the

UWG Celebrates 40 Years of Nursing

The University of West Georgia has been producing excellent nurses for the last 40 years. Many of those nurses were welcomed back to campus recently when the Tanner Health System School of Nursing held a reunion celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Class of 1976.

[Read More Here](#)



To Give is to Receive

A team of University of West Georgia nursing faculty and staff, community members, health services staff, and senior nursing students traveled to Ecuador on a health-focused clinical program. For 17 days, students gained invaluable experience working with patients in community treatment centers around Quito, the second largest city in Ecuador.

[Read More Here](#)



2016 Daisy Awards



Two University of West Georgia faculty members from the Tanner Health System School of Nursing recently received the DAISY Award. The Disease Attacking the Immune System (DAISY) Foundation recognized Dr. Rita Mahmoud, assistant professor, and Melissa Downs, clinical assistant professor.

[Read More Here](#)

Nominations For The 2017 Daisy Awards Are Now Being Accepted

The purpose of the DAISY faculty award is to provide a national recognition program to colleges/schools of nursing. This award demonstrates appreciation to faculty for their commitment and inspirational influence on nursing students. The Foundation hopes that this program will contribute to a positive work environment for faculty in schools.

To nominate a faculty member, share an example of the nominee's excellence in education including specific Criteria for Extraordinary Nursing Faculty. All faculty members are eligible for nomination and can be nominated by students, faculty and administrators.

[Click here to find out more.](#)



The DAISY Faculty Award

IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

In collaboration with



American Association
of Colleges of Nursing

Soliciting Nominations Now!

**Honor the inspirational influence our
Nursing Faculty provide their students -
our Nurses of Tomorrow - everyday**

THE DAISY FACULTY AWARD AT

UWG Tanner Health System School of Nursing

The DAISY Faculty Award was established by the DAISY Foundation in memory of J. Patrick Barnes who died at 33 of ITP, an auto-immune disease. The Barnes Family was awestruck by the clinical skills, caring and compassion of the nurses who cared for Patrick. They created this national award to demonstrate appreciation to faculty for their commitment and inspirational influence on their nursing students and to say thank you to nursing faculty everywhere.

Look for Nomination forms!

On the THS SON website homepage under the "Get Connected" tab!

Nominations accepted until Sunday, April 2, 2017

Please email your completed form to:
daisyawd@westga.edu



Tanner Health System
School of Nursing



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UNIVERSITY of  **Tanner Health System
West Georgia School of Nursing**

UWG's Online Graduate Nursing Program is ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.

For More Information

For more information on our Graduate Programs contact Embry Ice at 678-839-5115 or via email at eice@westga.edu. Or visit the Tanner Health Systems School of Nursing web site [here](http://westga.edu/nursing).