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On the Cover

Dr. Olivia May’s pediatric practice
At the Capstone College of Nursing (CCN), we are proud of our state-of-the-art facility and the young women and men who come through its doors. Our traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program produces exceptional nurses who enter the workforce prepared to face the challenges of today’s health care system.

In this issue of the Capsule, we go beyond our traditional BSN program to discuss RN-to-BSN and advanced practice nursing. We include highlights from several of our faculty practitioners.

CCN’s RN Mobility students make up our fastest-growing student population. The program provides an opportunity for nurses with associate degrees to earn their BSNs. Many of these students continue beyond the BSN to master’s and even doctoral level degrees while working and remaining in their communities. One graduate of our RN Mobility program, who went on to become a CRNA, tells us about a successful Nurse Anesthesia practice he and his colleague have established in Tuscaloosa. In “We’re Doing It Together!”, you will learn about twins who travel the RN Mobility path together. Both aspire to further their education beyond bachelors degrees.

A number of active military personnel are enrolled in CCN, continuing their nursing education. Because of the convenience of our online classes and flexible clinical options, we attract nurses stationed on bases in the US and beyond. In the article, “An Officer, a Gentleman and a CCN Grad”, read about Lieutenant Commander Christian Melendez and his experiences in two of our graduate programs.

Enjoy our recurring sections with highlights of student, faculty and staff accomplishments, and the contributions of community partners, alumni and friends.

As you see from this issue of the Capsule, our College is multi-faceted, reaching beyond its doors to deliver nursing education and provide service to our community. We hope you enjoy learning more about us.
I believe that I am a better, more valuable faculty member because I have current, clinical experience. The positive synergy attained from this combination is quite rewarding for me personally, and I strive to share this synergy with patients, students, and colleagues.
Endless Possibilities

It would be impossible to list the limitless options for nursing faculty practice, but the benefits to all parties are easily chronicled. First, let’s start with a loose definition of “nurse practitioner faculty practice” - an arrangement in which a nurse practitioner (NP) faculty member, on a part time basis, utilizes the NP skill set to direct or provide care in a clinical setting. Faculty members possess enhanced capabilities derived from their academic preparation and clinical expertise, to improve both health care delivery and outcomes. The hands-on knowledge gleaned from enhanced practice then flows back to the College through enhanced teaching, research opportunities, and scholarship production.

Since our working definition is so loose, and tends to vary among universities, I will share what I do in my clinical practice as an example. Since 2005, I have been a member of an interdisciplinary team at Children’s Hospital of Alabama in Birmingham. My responsibilities are to assess, screen, evaluate, and diagnose children and adolescents who are overweight or obese. As a health care provider, I prescribe a comprehensive therapeutic treatment plan, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological strategies, provide patient and family education, as well as referral to available community resources, and/or other members of the health care team. Our team is always in search of new and innovative ideas to improve our health care delivery and patient outcomes. Over the last 11 years, I have had students from a wide range of disciplines and levels of education interact with patients in our clinic. Currently, I have a Doctor of Nursing Practice candidate working on a project in childhood obesity for rural primary care pediatric practices. I also have an undergraduate honor student working on a health literacy project. I often precept students from our NP program for their pediatric experiences.

As a CCN faculty member, I bring more than just my NP skills to the clinical site. I bring the University, and its students, with me. This is most beneficial to the clinical site. As faculty, I have access to the research resources from the UA library system to enhance my practice and support my clinical colleagues. I bring students at all levels and disciplines who are eager to learn and translate knowledge learned in the classroom to the real world in the form of projects. Current employees of the clinical site have access to faculty members in their own environment to ask questions about available programs for furthering their education. I serve as a role model for staff for professional behavior and responsibility; and I strive to increase everyone’s education and clinical expertise. I teach at clinic, as much as I teach in class.

Bridging Clinical & Classroom Experiences

The Capstone College of Nursing also reaps benefits from faculty practice. Clinical sites provide workplace learning experiences under the supervision of CCN faculty for students at all levels; undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and post-doctoral fellows. Faculty bridge the real world clinical experiences into teaching in the classroom, by presenting actual, relevant and timely case studies. NP faculty are able to sustain professional growth in all three missions of the College: teaching, research and scholarship. We collaborate with our colleagues across the University for research and quality improvement projects. NP faculty maintain their clinical practice hours for certification which is important for accreditation. What I learn as a practicing clinician enhances my academic abilities.

I became a pediatric nurse practitioner because I wanted to work with children. I became a faculty member because I wanted to teach and conduct research. I have more resources and skills, and, I believe, better clinical outcomes, because I am an academic. I also believe that I am a better, more valuable faculty member, because I have current, clinical experience. The positive synergy attained from this combination is quite rewarding for me personally, and I strive to share this synergy with patients, students, and colleagues.

Finding the Right Balance

A faculty practice is not suited for all faculty members, but should, in my opinion, be more common than not. The significant time commitment associated with practice goes beyond the time spent directly in clinic. Balancing any job with personal life, family, child care, and other commitments is challenging, and the addition of a “second job” can be complex. But when the faculty member finds the right balance between academia and clinical practice; the college, clinical setting, faculty, students, and patients — all benefit.

Karen McCarty, PhD, MPH, MSN, CRNP
Practitioner — Children’s of Alabama
Robin Lawson, DNP, RN, ACNP-BC, NP-C, CCRN
Practitioner — The University of Alabama Student Health Center
Dr. Lawson, Senior Associate Dean of Academic Programs, is dual certified as an Adult and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner. In her practice, she provides health care services for the college student population.

Amy Beasley, RN, DNP
Practitioner — Hospice of West Alabama
Dr. Beasley works on regulatory and compliance updates as well as quality improvement projects for Hospice. She also educates staff on quality improvement and outcomes.

Kristi Acker, DNP, FNP-BC, AOCNP, ACHPN
Practitioner — Lewis & Faye Manderson Cancer Center
Dr. Acker works with oncologists to provide consultation, diagnosis, treatment, education and follow-up for patients with cancer and/or hematological disorders.
Olivia May, DNP, CRNP
Practitioner — The University of Alabama Medical Center
Dr. May works as a pediatric nurse practitioner. She is responsible for assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of infants, children, and adolescents in a primary care setting.

Gwen Hooper, PhD, RN, FNP, APRN-BC
Practitioner — Tuscaloosa Urology
Dr. Hooper is one of only 150 nurse practitioners in the country with a specialty certification in urology (CUNP). Her clinical focus is primarily in the area of female pelvic and urologic health conditions such as interstitial cystitis, infections, incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse.
The Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (FAANP) recently selected nurse practitioner (NP) leaders for induction to FAANP. Two CCN faculty, Drs. Susan Appel and Theresa Wadas, were selected for the honor. The 2016 FAANP Induction Ceremony was held during the AANP National Conference in San Antonio, Texas in June 2016.

FAANP was established to recognize nurse practitioner leaders who are dedicated to the global advancement of NPs and the high-quality health care they deliver. Fellows have made outstanding contributions to health care through NP clinical practice, research, education, or policy. They are visionaries committed to the development of imaginative and creative future nurse practitioner leaders and strive to further the NP profession while enhancing AANP’s mission. Priority initiatives of FAANP are the creation and development of leadership and mentorship programs to foster the advancement of nurse practitioners and nurse practitioner students.

Dr. Susan J. Appel, a board certified Acute Care and Family Nurse Practitioner and a Fellow of the American Heart Association, is a Professor in the Capstone College of Nursing. Dr. Appel was selected as a FAANP based on outstanding contributions in NP Education and Research.

Dr. Theresa M. Wadas is an Assistant Professor in the Capstone College of Nursing, and is board certified as an Acute Care and Family Nurse Practitioner. Dr. Wadas was selected as a FAANP based on outstanding contributions in NP Education and Policy.

Drs. Appel and Wadas will join the select group of 524 FAANPs within the United States, only seven of which reside in the State of Alabama.
We’re Doing It TOGETHER!

Andreaus Croom, RN (l)
Dabness Croom, RN (r)

Students —
CCN’s RN Mobility Program
Close Knit Classmates

It's understandable that Andreaus and Dabness Croom like doing things together, twins usually do. These two have traveled the same path in careers and are now going through the Capstone College of Nursing's top-rated RN Mobility program together.

The Crooms have always known that they wanted to be nurses. Both found inspiration in their father who is an LPN. The 24-year-old Tuscaloosa natives earned their ADN degrees at the University of West Alabama (UWA) in Livingston.

Dabness and Andreaus first heard about CCN’s RN Mobility program while at UWA. As a valued CCN partner, UWA encourages nursing graduates to continue their education. The twins learned more about the program while working as nurse residents at DCH Regional Medical Center in Tuscaloosa. They felt it was a perfect fit for them.

Combining Work with School

The Crooms appreciate the way our curriculum builds upon their existing knowledge. Both say that their faculty are readily available when they have questions or need help. They have found the RN to BSN program to be very manageable for working nurses.

Dabness worked in the acute stroke unit at DCH before signing on as a travel nurse. In her current assignment in southern California, she works on a medical-surgical unit. She hopes that her next travel nursing position will take her to Washington, DC or Houston, Texas.

Andreaus has remained in Tuscaloosa continuing her work at DCH in medical-surgical nursing. She wants to try her hand in the emergency department, as well as labor and delivery. Andreaus hopes that her new degree will open up advancement opportunities.

Opportunities Ahead

The Crooms expect to graduate in December 2016. Both view getting their BSNs as the next step in the process of continuing their education. The twins see unlimited opportunities in nursing and Dabness is particularly interested in teaching nursing. She expects to return to Tuscaloosa after her travels but right now is enjoying seeing the country. Andreaus and Dabness understand the value of education and have exciting nursing careers ahead.

UA's RN Mobility Program

CCN offers two degree options for RNs who hold an associate degree or hospital diploma in nursing — an RN to BSN or an RN to BSN/MSN. Both programs of study are designed to allow nurses to continue working while completing the requirements for an advanced degree. All of the nursing courses are taught online and every effort is made to allow students to complete the clinical activities in an area close to their homes.

Following completion of core requirements, RN to BSN students may complete nursing courses in three semesters of full-time study. A part-time plan of study is available for students who need a slower pace due to multiple demands on their time.

The RN to BSN/MSN track provides an accelerated option for students who choose to pursue an advanced degree as a nurse case manager, clinical nurse leader or nurse practitioner. This track requires two to three years of nursing courses following completion of the core requirements. The BSN degree is awarded at the completion of the fourth semester. The MSN degree is awarded at the end of the final semester.

If you or any of your nursing colleagues are interested in additional information, please contact Katara Wilson at katara.wilson@ua.edu.
Lieutenant Commander Christian Melendez, a native of Dana Point, California graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Arts. He received his nursing degree from the University of Rhode Island, and completed a Masters from The University of Oklahoma. He earned a Master of Science in Nursing from The University of Alabama where he is currently a candidate for a Doctor of Nursing Practice.

Enlisting in the Navy in 1990, Lieutenant Commander Melendez completed basic training in San Diego. He attended Hospital Corps and Operating Room Technician schools, then served at Naval Hospital Naples, Italy in 1993. Melendez went on to earn a commission into the Nurse Corps and complete Officer Indoctrination School. He was subsequently assigned roles of increasing responsibility in Hawaii, Los Angeles and once again, Naples. In 2014, Melendez was hand-selected for his current assignment as the Head of the Inpatient Maternal Infant Department at Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia. The medical center has the Department of Defense’s largest Labor & Delivery center and is considered the “First and Finest” of Naval facilities.

Lieutenant Commander Melendez is married to his wife of twenty-three years, Alicia, and has three children, Luca (19) a Virginia Military Institute Cadet, Isabela (17), and Andreas (13).
Why did you decide to continue your education at the University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing?

Several years ago I began looking at online programs to continue my education. A friend of mine, Shawn Harris, explained his satisfaction with the Alabama program and recommended I check out the curriculum. The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) program attracted me because it emphasized many aspects consistent with the military roles of division officer, department head and director. Specifically, the CNL program emphasizes evidence-based practice, research, leadership, finance, and human relations coupled with a rigorous nursing foundation. The CNL curriculum along with my current Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) track has propelled me into multiple leadership challenges and opportunities.

I have a recruiting background and frequently worked with applicants who graduated from online programs only to be met with disappointment due to a lack of program standards, certification and rigor. Therefore, it was important for me to find the right school, basically a school that required no explanation to others or excuses. The University of Alabama, is a nationally ranked school, requires no introduction, has a solid reputation, and being a graduate and current student, provides a sense of pride with an element of prestige.

I have found The University of Alabama to be very military friendly. I started my work in Naples, Italy and continued my education with seamless transition to Virginia. I have had multiple short-term work related trips interspersed, and provided I had Internet, I was well connected with the faculty.

My experience with the faculty and staff has been remarkable. I recall a semester while overseas when due to mail complications, my books failed to arrive on time. A staff member from the Capstone College of Nursing, recognizing my predicament, shipped the textbooks to me overnight. I received my books on time and continued on my journey. I am grateful for that kind of support, and recognized at that moment I was part of a family that cared about my education.

What are the biggest challenges you face in completing your advanced degrees while serving our Country?

Overcoming the fear of starting was the first hurdle, and then it all fell into place. However, the truth is, going to school whether civilian or military requires time, and therefore, time management. There will be times when papers are due, books need to be read, and assignments completed, but, this should be a welcomed challenge if you want to graduate from a quality program. As a married family man with three children, and a demanding job, there is a balance that must be met to succeed in this curriculum. While enrolled, I make it a point to check my classwork at least once daily to maintain momentum and stay on task. I print out the class schedule and map my week around due dates, this provides me with a time management template and weekly organization allowing for a “normal” lifestyle.

The College staff and faculty have been very helpful throughout my journey. The classes are organized in such a way to provide comprehensive and uniform schedules and due dates. Each class is set up in a similar fashion allowing the student to participate fully, with both classmates and faculty. Instructors have provided unlimited access with their office and personal phones, which I have used on occasion. In addition, there is research and writing support that is both timely and thorough, and strongly encouraged. At first I thought a computer based online program would be complicated, but truly the blackboard technology and associated programs have been extremely easy to use and practically self-explanatory. Nevertheless, the technical support has also been helpful and responsive.
How will your advanced degrees from CCN help you in the workplace?

I currently work as the Head, Inpatient Maternal Infant Department, which includes 10 labor & delivery suites, six OB triage areas, four special care areas, three operating rooms, a post anesthesia care unit, a forty-nine bed post partum unit, with four isolation suites, and a fifteen bed complicated OB and gynecologic surgical unit. This department is the busiest labor deck and post partum service line in the Department of Defense. Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia is considered the second largest Medical Center in the Department of Defense, and as such, there are multiple opportunities to function in a multidisciplinary, high profile environment.

My advanced degree and current DNP education have provided me with the tools to function in the creation of policy, hospital design, finance, supply and equipment, bringing considerable credibility to executive decision makers. Furthermore, human relations and leadership skills with contract and union representatives, military personnel, payroll and human resource concerns are key features in today’s health care environment. In my opinion, leaders need to have functional competency and education in these topics in order to adequately provide care and support in this complex health care system.

The University of Alabama has provided these tools and education, preparing me for my professional challenges.

Is there anything else you would want others to know?

In my opinion, Registered Nurses have a professional responsibility to not only attain advanced certification, but also an advanced education. For some, that means a terminal degree. Education can be a powerful equalizer in health care that truly propels the professional nurse in an upward trajectory with a voice for change, improvement and patient outcome. So much evidence supports improved patient outcomes from advanced nursing education, that it should be the expectation to continue learning in our profession. The Capstone College of Nursing has provided me with the tools to appreciate the importance of this concept, and firmly solidify how research and evidence-based practice can make a difference.

Finally, once given the tools to make a difference, I believe we have a responsibility to find strengths in others and encourage them to succeed. So much energy is wasted on identifying poor behavior, performance, and incompetence that we fail to recognize the unlimited potential in other less obvious skills. Critical thinking and creative problem solving are some tools taught through the Capstone College of Nursing that allow leaders to mix and match staff and skillsets, honing-in on what a person can do, rather than what they can’t do.
THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

When you earn your nursing degree from The University of Alabama, you are doing more than just earning a degree. You are earning your degree from one of the top universities in the country and taking steps to improve your career and the lives of your patients. Take control of your future and contact us today!

RN to BSN  |  RN to BSN/MSN  |  MSN-Case Management
MSN-Clinical Nurse Leader  |  MSN-Nurse Practitioner Concentration
EdD for Nurse Educators  |  DNP-Doctor of Nursing Practice

BamaByDistance.ua.edu/capsule
800-467-0227
By the Numbers

10 YEARS of STRATEGICALLY-PLANNED GROWTH

Capstone College of Nursing enrollment has grown 79% in the last decade.

CCN's DNP PROGRAM

#29 of 292 DNP programs in the U.S.


CCN's RN MOBILITY PROGRAM

#1 Online Bachelor of Science Program for RNs in the U.S.

Ranked by College Choice 2016, an independent online publication that helps students find and pay for college programs.
The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing

Approximately 50% of CCN students come from areas outside Alabama, including 44 different states.

But 73% of our BSN graduates stay in Alabama to practice as RNs.

75% of CCN full-time faculty are doctorally prepared.

38% of CCN full-time faculty are nurse practitioners.
December 2015
Pinning Ceremony and Graduation Reception

BSN grad and Pinning speaker, Laura Harris.

Maraldine Hill pins her daughter, Andreshe’A Caldwell.

Kim Franklin pins her daughter, Tristin.

Beverly Walters pins her daughter, Victoria Walters.
BSN grad and Pinning speaker, Keema Boland.

2013 CCN grad, Leah Marsh, pins her brother, Alex.

BSN grad, Rachel Adamy, is pinned by her father, Randy.

May 2016
Pinning Ceremony and Graduation Reception
Class of 1954

Dorothy Scarbrough

Dot says, “After a fulfilling forty-year career in nursing, I retired in 1994, traveled extensively, and started a jewelry designing hobby/business. My husband and I have been married sixty-four years and have three daughters, six grandchildren – three UA graduates and one AU graduate, one entering UA freshman and one in high school. I am blessed!”

“Congratulations to the photographer, the student models, and all the people who compiled the historical layout issue (Winter 2015) of the Capsule. It was rewarding and an honor to be included as one of the first graduates. It is a keeper for years to come! As a past faculty member, it would be great to receive news from my former nursing students at mebedot@comcast.net.”

Class of 1994

Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) Bayley Van Etten

Betsy has worked as a staff nurse in labor and delivery for the entire 22 years since graduation from nursing school. The last 10 years have been at Advocate Christ Medical Center – a regional tertiary care facility outside of Chicago where 4,000 to 5,000 babies are born each year. She was recently involved in the opening of the medical center’s new patient tower and was appointed Chair of the hospital Shared Practice (Shared Governance) Council by the Vice President of Nursing.

Betsy says, “I am proud to say that not a day has gone by in 22 years that I haven’t been deeply grateful for my education at the Capstone College of Nursing. I received the fundamentals of professionalism there that have shaped my practice for my whole life. Thanks for a great start and Roll Tide!”

Class of 1996

Michele Talley

Michele finished her PhD in Nursing at UAB in August 2015, where she is a faculty member in the Acute Care NP Program.

Class of 2003

Marc de los Reyes

Marc and his wife, Errica, had another baby girl, Chloe Harper, in June. Both Marc and Errica are CRNAs at DCH Regional Medical Center.

Jean Ann Simpson McMurrey

Jean Ann was named Chief Nursing Officer at Southern Tennessee Regional Health System Winchester. She is responsible for the direction and management of clinical departments including Med/Surg, OB, Critical Care, Emergency Department, Skilled Nursing, Inpatient Rehab, and GeroPsych. She also provides oversight for nursing in other departments such as surgery, cath lab, and clinics.

Class of 2005

Amelia E. de los Reyes

In February 2016, Amelia started a new position as Director of Quality Improvement/Clinical Health Informatics at The University of Alabama Student Health Center. In March, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Alabama Rural Health Association.

Class of 2007

Cortney Williams Coker

Cortney has worked at Collinsville Health Care and Rehab since 2003. She is the Assistant Director of Nursing. Cortney is also a Certified Risk Manager (CQRMS).
Class of 2013

Kathy H. Baldridge
Kathy received the 2016 AANP Nurse Practitioner State Award for Excellence from Louisiana.

Ron Bolen
Ron was promoted to the rank of Commander in the Navy Reserves. He is currently assigned as the Operations Officer for the 4th Medical Battalion, 4th MLG, USMC Reserves.

Heather Simmons Cole
Heather married Russell M. Cole in October of 2014. She is a charge nurse at Noland Health Services of Tuscaloosa. Heather also serves as a part-time clinical faculty member for the Capstone College of Nursing’s Fundamentals of Nursing course.

Class of 2014

Koury Young
Koury works as a pediatric critical care RN in the Special Care Unit at Children’s of Alabama where she completed her preceptorship. She also starts back to school at UAB this summer where she is pursuing an MSN in Acute and Primary Care Pediatrics. She was accepted into a seamless transition program which she hopes will allow her to progress into a DNP. It’s about fifteen semesters total, but she is excited to get started!

Class of 2015

Beth Tobey
Beth opened Tobey Clinic in Oakland, Tenn. in September 2015. It is a primary care clinic that cares for patients 2 years and older. Beth sees patients for sick visits, well visits, and minor injuries.

Heather (Chastain) Minniece
Heather married Thomas Minniece. They had a son, Thomas James, in October 2015. She has been accepted into CCN’s MSN, Clinical Nurse Leader program and will start in Fall 2016. Heather was also selected as a 2016-2017 University of Alabama Graduate Fellow.

Emily M. Snider
Emily was accepted to UAB’s Graduate School for the Family Nurse Practitioner Program. She will start in the Fall of 2016.
“It would be great to see nurses lead the health care industry in cost efficient quality care.”

Philip Fikes
Starting your own business... how many nurses out there have considered it? A little over two and half years ago, a colleague and I took the plunge and Capstone Anesthesia Services (CAS), LLC became a reality.

CAS is a group of advanced practice nurses (CRNAs) that provide anesthesia services for North River Surgical Center in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Our company is owned and operated by Wayne Hoffman, CRNA who serves as president and me — Philip B. Fikes, CRNA, MNA and company vice president.

In case you are wondering how we came up with the name for our group, let me explain. In Merriam Webster’s Dictionary, capstone is defined as a crowning achievement. CCN alums like me, take pride in graduating from the Capstone College of Nursing. And at CAS, we believe that it is truly a “crowning achievement” for us as advanced practice nurses to practice at our full potential while meeting an anesthesia need in our own community.

One of the key elements of forming a successful group is to recruit the best CRNAs. We did just that. I have the pleasure of working with some of the smartest, most caring, and vigilant CRNAs in the healthcare industry including a number of CCN grads. Combined, our years of experience surpass 100 in anesthesia practice. We provide quality care to thousands of people each year.

Our practice has several firsts under its belt. We are the first Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) group in Tuscaloosa. We are also the first anesthesia group to implement an Electronic Health Record (EHR) in West Alabama. EHR’s help clinicians improve safety, quality, and efficiency of care through ease of access to the patient’s health care information. Immediate access to health information is critical in making decisions that impact patient care. EHR’s also provide electronic reporting of data on quality of care.

Using EHR not only benefits patient care, it is a financially sound business practice which allows for more seamless service charge reimbursement from insurers and governmental agencies. We are proud to lead West Alabama into the future in this realm.

For all future nurses, I would recommend including business courses in your curriculum. If you plan to start a business or be a nursing manager, this is especially important. The health care industry is requiring nurses to be business savvy. It would be great to see nurses lead the health care industry in cost efficient quality care.
The Hill Crest Foundation, Inc., of Birmingham, Alabama, has promoted education at the Capstone College of Nursing for almost a decade with scholarships that are awarded to students pursuing graduate degrees. This year, Hill Crest broadened its support with another substantial donation to our College for faculty support.

Created in 1967, Hill Crest Foundation, operated the Hill Crest Hospital from 1970 to 1983. After selling the Birmingham mental health hospital, the Foundation decided to use its financial assets to continue support of mental health and other related social causes. A long-time and dedicated supporter of The University of Alabama over the years, the foundation supports academic excellence at the Capstone College of Nursing with The Hill Crest Foundation Endowed Scholarship.

The Capstone College of Nursing is grateful to Hill Crest Foundation and its chairman, Charles R. Terry, Sr., for promoting nursing education and helping many students move beyond a BSN and into advanced practice.

Kayla Glass, BSN, MSN
Nurse Practitioner —
Northport Rehab Pavilion

“Since I was a child, I have dreamed of a medical career. I knew, too, that I wanted my practice to be at the doctoral level.

Since this has been a life-long goal, I have put aside small sums for education along the way. I also have continued to work as an RN throughout my MSN and DNP programs.

Continuing my education at a young age and on a novice RN’s salary is a financial strain, but I can’t think of a better time than now. I can devote my full attention, finances, and time without family constraints.

Following my dream of earning a terminal degree is priceless to me, and I will do all in my power to achieve that goal.”

Kayla Glass is a 2012 BSN graduate of CCN. She returned to CCN to pursue her DNP in 2015 with help from a Hill Crest Foundation scholarship.

Hill Crest Foundation SCHOLAR on Path to DOCTORAL DEGREE

Hill Crest Foundation SUPPORTS our College

Kayla Glass, BSN, MSN
Nurse Practitioner —
Northport Rehab Pavilion

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Dr. Ernesto Perez received the CCN Distinguished Alumni Award which recognizes a CCN graduate who has demonstrated continuous and exemplary contributions to the profession of nursing.

John Beard, Chairman and President of Alacare Home Health & Hospice, received the Janet S. Awtrey Distinguished Nursing Leader Award which recognizes health care leaders for contributions made specifically to CCN and to nursing as a profession.

Annually the Capstone College of Nursing takes time to honor those who contribute to its success. From inside the walls of the College, and within our community, to places far away, we find advocates and supporters who help our College achieve its vision — being an innovative and inclusive environment for transforming nursing education, research, scholarship, and service.
Sara Kaylor worked as a trauma/surgical critical care nurse before finding her calling to educate others. She began her teaching career at the Capstone College of Nursing as a part-time clinical instructor. Sara earned her doctorate through the EdD for Nurse Educators program. She now serves as a full-time faculty member.
Dr. Sara Kaylor was selected to participate in Sigma Theta Tau’s 2016-2017 Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy (NFLA). Administered by STTI and The Elsevier Foundation, the 20-month highly selective mentored leadership academy is designed to further academic career development and success; promote nurse faculty retention and satisfaction; encourage personal leadership development; and cultivate high-performing, supportive academic work environments.

“Being a Scholar in this Academy means that I have the support and professional investment from an entire international network of nursing’s top leaders. Unique to this Academy experiences are the dyad and triad relationships that develop between the Scholar, the Leadership Mentor and the NFLA Faculty Advisor. Both my leadership mentor and faculty advisor have already been instrumental in framing my hopes and goals for this Academy experience.” Kaylor said.

The NFLA pairs aspiring full-time, non-tenured faculty leaders, called scholars, with experienced leadership mentors, who are then supported by academy faculty members. The academy curriculum includes a variety of educational strategies for developing leadership knowledge, competence and outcomes.

“On this journey, I seek to provide leadership of a team project that will advance and impact nursing education. My project interests actually center on the leadership development of our very own baccalaureate nursing students, as it is my goal for every nursing student to graduate a leader,” she said. “This doesn’t mean that I want our new graduates to land entry-level charge nurse or administrative roles, but rather that I desire for our graduates to be best equipped with the knowledge and experience of critical leadership behaviors such as high stakes communications, self- and social awareness and sharing visions of change. The development of such leadership behaviors during academic career preparation positions our new graduate nurses to best assert themselves in roles of patient advocacy.”

Kaylor received her Bachelor of Science in nursing from The Capstone College of Nursing in 2005. She received her Master of Science in Nursing with a rural case management focus from UA in 2011 and completed her doctoral degree in Instructional Leadership for Nurse Educators, also at UA, in 2012. Kaylor has six years of experience as a trauma/surgical critical care nurse. She joined the faculty of the Capstone College of Nursing in 2009 as a part-time clinical instructor, and in 2012 she became a full-time faculty member. Kaylor currently teaches in Semester II in both Fundamentals of Professional Nursing Practice and Pharmacology for Nursing Practice. Her areas of research interests include qualitative phenomenology, critical and feminist theoretical approaches and research on learning needs/styles and innovative teaching strategies for Millennial generation nursing students.

The EdD Nurse Educator program was created through a partnership between the Capstone College of Nursing and the College of Education. This doctoral degree in Instructional Leadership is taught by top UA professors from both Colleges to create an interdisciplinary course of study that prepares future faculty of nursing. Many of the classes are online, but to provide the kinds of interactions necessary for this field of study, students come to campus four weekends per semester for classes.

We boast many successes among our graduates who have used this degree as a pathway to professional advancement — inspiring others through their love and passion for nursing education. If you are ready to take a similar step forward, please contact Hayley Ray McNeill at Hayley.McNeill@ua.edu.

Sara K. Kaylor, EdD, RN
CCN Faculty Member
Dr. Kristi Acker was selected to serve on the American Nurse Association (ANA) Palliative & Hospice Nursing Professional Issues Panel. She also received a Hospice & Palliative Nurses Foundation (HPNF) Judy Lentz Scholarship.

Dr. Michelle Cheshire was elected President of the Good Samaritan Clinic Board of Directors for 2016. She and Dr. Haley Strickland received a grant from Sigma Theta Tau International for “Predicting Nursing Student Success: Exploring New Variables.”

UA was one of the very few companies in the nation chosen as a Worksite Innovation Award winner by the American Heart Association for a WellBAMA Sleep and Stress Program by Dr. Leslie Cole and Dr. Josh Eyer.

Dr. Josh Eyer received a UA grant for “Cognitive Investigations of Neurocognitive Factors in Chronic Pain.” He was co-investigator for another UA grant for “Changing Hope? The Effect of a One-Time Hope Intervention on Baccalaureate Nursing Students’ Standardized Exam Scores.”

Drs. Louanne and Richard Friend received a grant from the University of Alabama for “Effectiveness of Pre-Licensure Critical Care Interprofessional Education and Confidence to Practice Collaboratively in Healthy Work Environments.”

Dr. Safiya George, along with Dr. Pamela Payne-Foster, received a grant from the University of Alabama for “Multi-Level Strategies to Improve HIV Care in West Alabama.”

Dr. Ann Graves was chosen as the Assistant Editor of The Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care.

Dr. Marilyn Handley retired from the Capstone College of Nursing after twenty years. In addition to teaching responsibilities, Dr. Handley also served as a faculty advisor for many successful international medical mission trips for faculty and students.

Dr. Jasmine Hoggle, Dr. Michelle Cheshire and Tyler Keenum received a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield for “Diabetes Rise.”

Dr. Montgomery also received an Alabama League for Nursing Lamplighter Award in March. The award is given to those who have demonstrated exemplary performance in the nursing profession.

Congratulations to Dr. Michele Montgomery who was named a 2016 President’s Faculty Research Award Winner by The University of Alabama. The award showcases excellence in research and scholarship. Dr. Montgomery was recognized for her community-based participatory program of research to assess risk factors and health outcomes in preschool children and their parents. She recently received, along with Dr. Paige Johnson, a grant for “Improving Pickens County Residents’ Knowledge of Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease and Type 2 Diabetes.”
Dr. Gwen Hooper received a UA grant for “Pessary Practices and Quality of Life in Women with Pelvic Organ Prolapse.” She also became the president-elect of the Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates.

Tyler Keenum, Dr. Michelle Cheshire and Dr. Jasmine Hoggle a received a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield for “Diabetes Rise.”

Dr. Robin Lawson was appointed vice president of membership for the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama.

Dr. Lori Lyon received a grant from the Sigma Theta Tau International Epsilon-Omega Chapter for “Understanding Attitudes Toward Service Learning in a Baccalaureate Nursing Program.”

Dr. Alice March was appointed to the Research and Advisory Council (RSAC) for Sigma Theta Tau International. She was co-investigator on the “Changing Hope?” project with Dr. Eyer and Dr. Wedgeworth.

Dr. Olivia May was appointed to serve as an ambassador for the National League of Nursing.

Dr. Paige Johnson and Dr. Michele Montgomery received a UA CCHS grant for “Improving Pickens County Residents’ Knowledge of Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease and Type 2 Diabetes.”

Dr. Ernesto Perez, instructor and practicing CRNA, was accepted into the Executive MBA program at University of South Florida in May 2016.

Dr. Marietta Stanton recently passed the certification exam adding Adult Gerontology in Primary Care Nurse Practitioner to her credentials.

Dr. Haley Strickland and Dr. Michelle Cheshire received a grant from Sigma Theta Tau International for “Predicting Nursing Student Success: Exploring New Variables.”

Dr. Monika Wedgeworth was primary investigator for the grant “Changing Hope? The Effect of One-Time Hope Intervention on Baccalaureate Nursing Students’ Standardized Exam Scores.”

Drs. Teresa Welch and Ashleigh Woods both received a Doctorate in Education (EdD) in Instructional Leadership for Nurse Educators from The University of Alabama in May 2016.
Publications


Presentations


Harvey, N. (4/22/16) Continuing the legacy of Mary Mahoney: the life and legacy of America’s first professional black nurse and the state of America’s black nurses today. The Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses’ Club of Greater Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama. Invited.


New Faces at the
CAPSTONE COLLEGE OF NURSING

Kristi A. Acker, DNP, FNP-BC, AOCNP, ACHPN

Kristi received a BSN from The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing in 1992 and an MSN from Mississippi University for Women in 1999. In 2009, she was part of the inaugural DNP cohort to graduate from The University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Acker is certified as a Family Nurse Practitioner. As a registered nurse, she held certifications in both oncology and palliative care.

In her advanced practice role, Dr. Acker holds specialty certifications as an Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner and is one of only eleven Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurses in Alabama. She maintains her clinical practice with Oncology Associates of West Alabama, providing outpatient oncology services at the Manderson Cancer Center at DCH in the Fayette, Alabama satellite clinic.

On a state level, Dr. Acker serves on the Alabama Board of Nursing Advanced Practice Advisory Committee and was appointed by the State of Alabama Medical Director to serve on the newly formed State Advisory Council on Palliative Care. She also serves on the Advanced Practice Advisory Council for the Alabama Board of Nursing. Dr. Acker belongs to numerous professional organizations including the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau.

Abby Grammer Horton, MSN, RN

Abby earned her Bachelor of Science in Political Science from The University of Alabama in 2006. She later graduated from the Capstone College of Nursing with a BSN in 2010 and an MSN in Rural Case Management in 2011. She is currently enrolled in the EdD for Nurse Educators Program at UA. Mrs. Horton teaches Fundamentals of Nursing and Adult Health.

Mrs. Horton began her nursing career working on a medical-surgical unit. After earning her MSN, she taught at a community college before joining the Capstone College of Nursing. Mrs. Horton’s interests in nursing practice include health policy reform, particularly those issues concerning orthopedic care, pain management, holistic care, access to care, spirituality, and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices. She also has extensive experience teaching NCLEX preparatory classes and nursing leadership.

She is active in the Alabama State Nurses Association (ASNA) at both the state and district levels currently serving as the District II vice-president. She is also the 2013 recipient of the ASNA New Member Excellence Award.

Hayley Ray McNeill

Hayley serves as the Coordinator of Student Recruitment for the Nurse Educator Program. She hails from Texas and received a Bachelor of Arts in Musical Theater and Legal Studies from The University of Alabama. After working at Walt Disney World as a dancer and performer, her passion has become recruiting students to UA. Ms. McNeill is presently pursuing an Executive MBA at UA.
Sarah Robinson, BA, MSN, RN

Sarah received a BSN from The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing in 2006. In 2014, she earned an MSN from The University of Alabama. She is currently working on an EdD in Instructional Leadership with a Nurse Education Specialization from UA. Prior to entering the nursing field, she earned a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado in 2001.

Mrs. Robinson worked as a circulating nurse on the cardiovascular team in the operating room at DCH in Tuscaloosa. She joined the Capstone College of Nursing as a part-time clinical instructor in Adult Health in 2013 and became a member of the full-time faculty in 2016. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International.

Teresa D. Welch, EdD, MSN, RN

Teresa received a Doctorate of Education in Instructional Leadership from the University of Alabama in May 2016. She received a Master’s degree in Case Management from UA in August 2014 and a BSN from UA in May 1987. Her research interest is understanding the development of expertise in critical care nursing.

Dr. Welch has twenty-nine years of critical care nursing experience that includes the emergency department and adult intensive care units. She also has twenty years of experience as the nurse manager for a thirty-two bed medical intensive care unit. Dr. Welch currently holds Nurse Executive Advanced Certification from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). She is a current Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) instructor and past Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) instructor. Dr. Welch is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International and Golden Key International.

Ashleigh Woods, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE

Ashleigh received a Doctorate of Education in Instructional Leadership from the University of Alabama in May 2016. She earned a BSN from UA in 2007 and an MSN in Case Management from UA in 2014. Dr. Woods has earned her certification from the National League of Nursing as a Certified Nursing Educator (CNE).

Dr. Woods has clinical experience in a variety of nursing units, including labor and delivery, mother-baby, neonatal intensive care, occupational health, and cardiac critical care. She had previous experience as a clinical instructor and nursing lab instructor before joining the Capstone College of Nursing faculty. She teaches in Adult Health and Evidence Based Practice courses. Her research interests include online learning, active learning strategies, and nursing student retention. Her professional memberships include the National League for Nursing.
Join us for Homecoming at the Capstone
Complimentary Barbecue
2 1/2 hours before kickoff
Saturday, October 1, 2016
The Capsule is published biannually by the Office of Advancement.

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