Undergraduate Research Thrives at CCN

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Suzanne S. Prevost, RN, PhD, FAAN
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Director of Advancement

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President, CCN Alumni Association

Patrick McIntyre, Photographer

Tabby H. Brown, Editor & Designer

Cover Photo: Madison Montanari, Senior Nursing student from Beaumont, Texas. Madison’s experiences at CCN include working with a faculty mentor and performing research which was presented at the UA Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference.

Photo courtesy of Zachary Riggins, Office of Photography, Strategic Communications.
Focus on Research

Increasing scholarly productivity from the College has been one of my goals since joining CCN in 2013. When Dr. Stuart Bell was named president of UA, I couldn't have been more pleased to learn that his vision for the University also encompassed growing Alabama’s research reputation. I am confident that our College is heading in the right direction in this regard.

In this issue of the Capsule, we focus on the advances our College has made in the area of research. Our students and faculty members are rising to the challenge. I am proud to say that CCN’s newly funded research projects have increased more than 400% over the previous academic year.

One of Capstone College of Nursing’s strategies to grow scholarly activity was to re-invent our Office of Scholarly Affairs which supports faculty in their research efforts. In “A Success Story” you will meet the team that comprises this office and learn about the services they provide.

In addition to challenging our faculty to ramp up research, we encourage our students to venture deeper into research, as well. Please check out Dr. Ann Graves’ article about Student Research at CCN.

Elena Thompson is one of many undergraduate students who shine in this arena. Our graduate students also produce some fine scholarly projects. In “Disruption: A Path to Innovation”, you will learn about the achievements of our student, Dr. Luis Cabret who submitted his scholarly project in two languages.

Research aside, there is much going on at CCN. We have a wonderful story for you about three people we know very well. One of our valued staff members has two children graduating from our program this December. Please take a moment to read about Cynthia Morris and her children, Ashleigh and Matthew, in “It’s a Family Affair.”

In the recurring sections of our magazine, we celebrate our students, alumni and benefactors. I hope you enjoy seeing what’s happening at the Capstone. We fittingly conclude this issue with Faculty and Staff accomplishments, scholarly publications and presentations.

Roll Tide Roll!

Suzanne Prevost

The University of Alabama
A Success Story –
Office of Scholarly Affairs

The Capstone College of Nursing (CCN) faculty has heard and is answering the call of The University of Alabama to “Increase the University’s productivity and innovation in research, scholarship and creative activities that impact economic and societal development.” This goal is a vital part of UA’s new strategic plan.

In the last year, CCN has seen a surge of scholarly proposal submissions. Those efforts have translated into a significant increase in extramural funding received. Submissions have increased by 73% and the number of funded projects has risen by 67%. CCN researchers have been supported in these efforts by our College’s Office of Scholarly Affairs.

The mission of the Capstone College of Nursing Office of Scholarly Affairs (OSA) is to facilitate faculty and students in the generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge as it relates to nursing care of individuals and families across the lifespan and around the globe. Their goal is to support investigators in the development and submission of cutting edge research proposals and high impact publications.

In the summer of 2015, OSA was redesigned to support CCN exclusively. The office is headed by Dr. Safiya George who obtained her PhD in Nursing and a certificate in Women’s Studies from Emory University. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Research on Religion and Health from Duke University. Dr. George is also a board-certified adult nurse practitioner. Considered a leading scholar in the field of spirituality/religion and health, her own research focuses on spirituality and its relationship to mental and physical health among people living with HIV/AIDS. Dr. George’s duties in the realm of OSA include reviewing grant applications, supporting faculty in defining their research trajectories and serving as a liaison on behalf of CCN with the university’s central research administration office and the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
Stefanie O’Neill serves as the Grant and Contract Specialist for OSA. Mrs. O’Neill received her BA in International Business from the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University, Mannheim, Germany and a BA in International Business Administration from the Open University, Great Britain. Mrs. O’Neill previously worked as the Coordinator for Contracts and Grants in the Department of Psychiatry, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine and later as a Lead Analyst in Contracts and Grants Accounting for TTUHSC El Paso. In her role with CCN, Mrs. O’Neill supports faculty with the development and submission of research proposals. She helps identify funding opportunities from federal funding agencies and foundations, develops grant budgets and handles other pre-award responsibilities.

My goal is to support many more great research proposals and to increase the external funding we receive for exceptional research projects which support the mission of the college.

Stefanie O’Neill

The third member of the OSA team is Dr. Joshua Eyer, a clinical health psychologist. Dr. Eyer earned a BA in Psychology from the University of Virginia, an MS in Applied Psychology from the University of South Alabama, and a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of North Carolina. His clinical and academic focus is on the study of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with chronic illness, particularly chronic pain conditions. He has special expertise in clinical trial methodology, data analytic approaches, grant writing, and manuscript preparation. He supports OSA by serving as a methodological/statistical consultant to faculty working on research and other funded projects.

I’m proud of the quality of research proposals being produced at CCN. The synergy of great faculty with great ideas, the know-how of OSA, and the support of the dean really is working to build a stronger research portfolio at CCN.

Dr. Joshua Eyer

Other services provided by OSA include research training and support, formatting bio sketches and other proposal documents for investigators, sharing information about publishing and grant-writing resources and tools, and hosting events for research. The group is also adept at identifying opportunities for collaboration with other individuals, departments, colleges or institutions and communities relative to research and grants, consultations and presentations.

My goal is to support many more great research proposals and to increase the external funding we receive for exceptional research projects which support the mission of the college.

Stefanie O’Neill

My future goals for OSA are to continue to provide development activities and feedback that contribute to faculty success in designing studies, writing proposals, conducting studies and disseminating findings. We will continue to improve our current initiatives and develop new ones, improve our efficiency, partner across campus and the UA system, engage faculty and students and position faculty to be successful in this competitive funding climate.

Dr. Safiya George

The University of Alabama
UA’s STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL #2

Increase the University’s productivity and innovation in research, scholarship and creative activities that impact economic and societal development.

Objectives:

- Leverage the University’s unique, emerging strengths to create a strong culture and opportunities for cross-disciplinary research, scholarship, innovation and creative activities that have economic and societal impact, and which contribute to the University’s teaching and service mission.

- Invest in infrastructure that promotes a thriving research and economic development enterprise.

- Develop a multi-level, continuous improvement process that facilitates research, scholarship and creative accomplishments.

- Establish a regular dialog among the administration, faculty, staff and students that creates a climate of shared understanding and addresses opportunities for and barriers to productivity, scholarship and creative activity.

- Cultivate, support, sponsor and conduct community-engaged research that enriches our teaching, research and service missions and enhances the University’s designation by Carnegie as a community-engaged institution.

Scholarly Productivity

On target with the University Strategic Plan!

Funding Increased 423%

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<th>Year</th>
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Submissions Increased 74%

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Funded Projects Increased 63%

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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
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Meet Elena Thompson, a second semester junior from Madison, Wisconsin, majoring in nursing and minoring in computer-based honors. She is on track to graduate with a BSN with Honors in 2018 through a selective four year undergraduate research program consisting of classes in computer programming, research fundamentals and complex problem solving followed by two years of independent research, in addition to CCN’s rigorous program of nursing courses. She is also in the STEM path to a master’s in business (MBA). STEM is an honors program allowing select students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to begin working towards an MBA by taking a series of business classes designed for engineers, technicians and scientists. She can complete the STEM path, the BSN and receive an MBA by 2019.

In the summer of 2012, Elena began her early research experience as she worked as a research assistant with Dr. Lisa Thompson and Dr. K.C. LaMattina at John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County Division of Ophthalmology. In this project, Biweekly Atropine in the Prevention of Myopic Progression, she participated in a meta-analysis of pediatric myopia treatment using a variety of statistical techniques. During her time at The University of Alabama she has been involved in research with Dr. Libo Tan (fall 2015) in the College of Human Environmental Sciences - Nutrition Department (project entitled: Non-Steady State Kinetic Model of [3H] Vitamin A-labeled Chylomicrons in Rats Treated with 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD). She has also worked with Dr. Alan Blum (fall 2014 – spring 2015) in the College of Community Health Sciences examining school-based contradictions surrounding obesity in an effort to improve public health (project entitled: The Role of Schools and Universities in Addressing the Obesity Crisis). Elena served as a Student Health Educator as part of a diabetes education team leading conversations and sharing information about healthy lifestyles in Alabama’s Blackbelt region and in numerous healthcare clinics.
Barbara Ann Graves is an associate professor in the Capstone College of Nursing at the University of Alabama (UA). Dr. Graves is a PhD prepared registered nurse who holds a doctorate in Clinical Health Sciences. As a nurse-scientist with extensive experience in practice and teaching in critical care nursing, cardiovascular nursing, and evidence-based practice, she has focused her research on primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease and cardiometabolic risk (CMR), the interplay of risk factors for diabetes leading to heart disease. She has recently completed a funded research pilot study that examined the racial differences in CMR among women.

Dr. Graves has also developed expertise in the use of geographical information systems (GIS). She has experience with design, set up, and management of research studies using GIS. Dr. Graves believes using GIS analysis to study CMR and health service access can serve to guide policy deliberations and health resource allocations that can target major healthcare priorities. In an extension of her previous work with GIS she is now studying geographical access to diabetes education services in Alabama and hopes to increase understanding of what is needed to guide interventions to improve cardiovascular health.

To address the need for future researchers in the area of healthcare service access, health outcomes, and health disparities, educational opportunities are needed to provide research experiences for undergraduate students. The Computer-Based Honors Program (CHP) at the University of Alabama is a nationally recognized interdisciplinary undergraduate research program that brings together academically elite students with research professors and cutting-edge technology to complete research projects. Dr. Graves, seeking to expand her work using GIS, needed an assistant with computer technology expertise. Elena, a CHP student with an interest in diabetes research, needed a research mentor.

As a faculty member at UA, Dr. Graves has three primary roles: teaching, scholarship and service. One effort of these combined roles is to teach and motivate students to engage in meaningful research. To this end, she designed a project to expose undergraduate students to the mechanisms, both technical and intellectual, of basic health services research. This project was designed to immerse CHP students in research experiences in the areas of healthcare service access, health outcomes, and health disparities. The purpose of the retrospective cohort, descriptive study was to empirically measure and display spatial patterns of potential geographical accessibility of the Alabama populations to diabetes educational services (DES) and to determine the relationship between...
geographical access, diabetes mortality, and socio-demographic variables. The goal of the research was to identify geographical accessibility to DES among persons in Alabama. Geographical information systems (GIS) technology was used to empirically and visually examine spatial relationships between variables related to diabetes and access to services.

Elena selected this proposal and has been integrated into the project based on her involvement in the CHP. To date the scope of student involvement for Elena has included:

1. Learning to use ArcGIS Geographical Information System (GIS) computer software for the analysis of geographical location of diabetes education services.
2. Learning to import US Census and Center for Disease Control data for the analysis of population proportions with access to diabetes education services in Alabama.
3. Extensive review of literature to support this research project.

Future planned student involvement will include:

1. Performing data analysis functions within ArcGIS.
2. Assisting project director with data interpretation.
3. Assisting project director with manuscript preparation and publication as second author.

The research project described here has brought together a student majoring in nursing with a nursing faculty to do research about healthcare access for people with diabetes in Alabama. It has demonstrated the integration of the computing technology of GIS into the teaching, learning, and research process. This collaboration between a faculty and a CHP student is an exemplar of innovative teaching, learning, and research.

The Future of Research
“Innovation. Creativity. Discovery. For Alabama. For the World.”

President Stuart Bell
Cynthia Morris is an integral part of the Capstone College of Nursing (CCN) Office of Student Affairs. A graduate of Ohio State University, Cynthia is CCN’s Records Specialist. She coordinates data collection and maintains student records and databases. She is also the smiling face, helping our students navigate the program and understand policies and procedures. She follows our nursing students from acceptance to graduation, assisting with events such as promotion to upper division and commencement.

While guiding hundreds of young women and men through the Capstone College of Nursing is a job she loves, Cynthia takes special pride in two particular students – her own children, Matthew and Ashleigh Morris. Matthew, a traditional student, began CCN’s upper division program in the fall of 2014. Ashleigh took a different path and earned her associate degree at Shelton State Community College. Then, she began our RN Mobility program in January 2016.

Cynthia knows firsthand how skillfully CCN faculty members prepare students to face the challenges and demands associated with being a nurse. She says, “I am confident both Ashleigh and Matthew will have wonderful opportunities for career choices and advanced degrees because they have been thoroughly equipped for nursing from their experiences at CCN.” The Morris children both donned black robes with apricot nursing tassels this December and walked at UA’s Winter Commencement ceremony.

Here’s the story of how both came to the Capstone College of Nursing!

Ashleigh

When did you decide you wanted to be a nurse and why?

I have wanted to be a nurse since I was 4 or 5 years old. I remember sitting with my grandfather who had kidney issues. He would always say, “Become a nurse so you can take care of your grandpa.” He loved the nurses that he met. Since then, being a nurse is all that I ever wanted to be because I wanted to take care of him.

Where are you working now?

I am currently working at DCH Regional Medical Center.

Why did you choose to go through our RN Mobility Program to get your BSN?

I chose to go through this program because I learned that the faculty and staff at this college were very welcoming and would do all they could to help with student needs. The RN Mobility instructors’ awareness and accommodation of those who work full-time and have families is exceptional. Their understanding definitely told me that this program was right for me.

Did your mother influence your decision to go to school here?

My mother played a significant role in my decision to apply to CCN because she knows the curriculum so well. She knew that I was concerned about tackling school while working full-time and taking care of my 4-year-old son. I expressed my worries to her and she reassured me that the program was...
doable for working mothers. She just kept pushing me with encouragement.

**What do you like most about the nursing field?**

Nursing is caring. Knowing that you make a difference in someone's life is the greatest feeling anyone can experience, even if you aren't a nurse. What I like most about the nursing field is helping our patients. The "thank yous" are so rewarding.

**Do you plan to further your education after your BSN?**

Yes, most definitely! I plan to go back to get my Doctor of Nursing Practice and become a Family Nurse Practitioner.

Matthew

**When did you decide you wanted to be a nurse and why?**

I've always known that I wanted to help others and be a part of the healthcare system. I realized that nursing was for me at fifteen years old when I volunteered at DCH. I helped nurses with basic care activities, primarily moving patients and helping feed them. At the end of each day, I always had a sense of accomplishment because I knew I helped someone who needed me.

**Why did you choose Alabama and the Capstone College of Nursing?**

I did a lot of research on nursing schools in the Southeast and the Capstone College of Nursing would consistently be in the list of the best. The University of Alabama has always been a familiar, comfortable place for me. It didn't hurt that my mother worked there as well. She always spoke highly of the program but she encouraged me to follow my passions regardless of where they took me.

**What do you like most about the Capstone College of Nursing program?**

I like the intensity of the program. Nursing can be very challenging at times; but there was never a time where I felt alone or that I couldn't express my concerns to a faculty member. I felt confident during every clinical rotation that I was adequately prepared for anything that might have been thrown my way. Knowing that I had the full support of the entire college helped push me through and I am very grateful for that.

**What do you like most about the nursing field?**

Being able to positively make a difference in someone's life is what drew me to nursing. Hands-on patient care gives me a feeling of accomplishment by helping people who can't help themselves. Being the patient's advocate brings out a passion in me like no other.

**Do you plan to further your education after your BSN?**

I plan on going to nurse practitioner school and obtaining a DNP from the University of Alabama with a dual certification in mental and family health specialties.
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Do you plan to further your education after your BSN? I plan on going to nurse practitioner school and obtaining a DNP from the University of Alabama with a dual certification in mental and family health specialties.
I recently read Whitney Johnson’s book “Disrupt Yourself: Putting the Power of Disruptive Innovation to Work.” In Ms. Johnson words, “When you disrupt yourself, you are looking for growth...you have to push and pull against objects and barriers that would constrain and constrict you.” It is possible to reinvent yourself and be a pioneer, when you dare to step away from your comfort zone. Her book validated that the Capstone College of Nursing’s Doctor of Nursing Program (DNP) program follows that process. Although several faculty members, staff, students, and alumni might be surprised, or even concerned, rest assured that disruption is a path to innovation.

At the Capstone College of Nursing (CCN), we are constantly leaping in new directions to challenge our students, to stay current, and to remain competitive with other nursing schools. The ultimate goal is to graduate competent nursing professionals who will carry out the vision and mission of CCN while caring for populations in the U.S. and abroad. Developing new programs, updating curricula, and testing emotional intelligence as criteria for admission are among our many innovations.

Two years ago, Dr. Alice March, Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, invited me to become a faculty advisor to Puerto Rican DNP student, Luis Manuel Cabret. His nursing experience and qualifications for admission to the DNP program were excellent, however Luis struggled a bit with the English language. Dr. March envisioned that pairing Luis and I in a mentoring relationship could potentially benefit both of us, and the DNP program. Alice and I discussed the potential opportunities for innovation while serving in this advisory role to a student residing in a Spanish speaking country. What if we required Luis to submit his Capstone Project (a scholarly project required for graduation in the DNP program) both in English and Spanish? We could also encourage him to submit it to a refereed Spanish journal for publication. Dr. March’s vision, leadership, and support to both Luis and I during this process was crucial to the success we celebrate in this article.
Luis Cabret's interest in nursing developed in the early 90s while working in laundry services at a hospital in Puerto Rico. He made the decision to enroll in nursing school and graduated with a BSN in 1994. Continuing his studies, Luis went on to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. The Nurse Practitioner (NP) role was not recognized in Puerto Rico until July of 2016; however, that didn't stop Luis from taking the national exam in the U.S. and obtaining his FNP-BC in 2013. Luis decided to stay in Puerto Rico because of his desire and commitment to provide healthcare services to underserved patients in his native land. In addition to his NP practice, Mr. Cabret has also been a faculty member at the Universidad Del Turabo, Sistema Universitario Ana G. Mendez in Puerto Rico since 2012. Prior to this position, he was a nursing instructor at Universidad Metropolitana in San Juan, PR. He has presented his work extensively, addressing disabilities, HIV/AIDS, health literacy levels, elderly and poor Hispanic patients, and LGBT disparities among others. Luis has received several awards for his presentations and dedication to the profession. He also volunteers with Bill’s Kitchen, a non-profit providing services to HIV/AIDS patients in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Cabret is a very simple and humble man who is a role model to others because of his perseverance, dedication, and flexibility. During his DNP journey, Luis faced many challenges from hospitalizations to the death of several family members. After each challenge he came back stronger and more determined to succeed in the program. When we proposed to him that his Capstone Project be submitted in both English and Spanish, he accepted the monumental task without hesitation. Pushed beyond the limits, even having to delay graduation by one semester, Luis accepted the challenge and continued with even more resolve to submit a paper worthy of publication in both languages. He did it! Mr. Cabret’s Capstone Project was accepted for publication in a Spanish peer review journal four days before his graduation. Recently, it was published in the journal “Impulso,” the official publication of Colleges of Nursing in Puerto Rico.

I am extremely proud to share this piece honoring a man who has taught me that anything is possible, when you are willing to disrupt yourself. To date, I do not know of any DNP programs in the U.S. requiring a graduate student to submit their final project in Spanish and English. Our disruption resulted in a DNP program innovation. I am so proud to celebrate Dr. Luis Manuel Cabret, DNP, FNP-BC, ARNP, CCRN.

Muchas Gracias,
Ernesto C. Perez, DNP, CRNA, ARNP, PMC-I, FNAP
The Crimson Tide triumphed over the Kentucky Wildcats at Bryant Denny Stadium on October 1, 2016 and the Capstone College of Nursing scored a victory as well! Our students worked hard to build a legendary float for the Homecoming Parade and came in first in their division. Our Alumni Association hosted a pre-game barbecue that was a hit, too! It was a good day to be a Bama Nurse.
Dear Fellow Alums,

The CCN Alumni Association has been focusing on a goal that we share with our Board of Visitors (BOV) and the College administration – growing alumni membership! To that end, Dean Prevost, BOV President Rick Hayes, and I are hitting the road. We hope to come to a town near you soon. On our first road trip to Dothan, Ala., we had a great time reconnecting with area alumni and showing them how much we appreciate their support of our College.

We have plans for an alumni event in Nashville, Tenn. shortly after the first of the year. If you are in that area, keep an eye out for email and Facebook announcements. If you want us to consider hosting a gathering in your area, please email Shelley Jordan at sjordan@ua.edu. Hope to see you soon and Roll Tide!

Philip Fikes, CRNA, MNA

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Capstone College of Nursing Alumni Association Board of Directors

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Nancy Robinson
Josh Thomas
Johnny Tice
Newton Tinsley

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CCN Board of Visitors (and some spirited UA students)
Dear Fellow Alums,

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Philip Fikes, CRNA, MNA

Sara E. Barger Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Precious Barnes.

Donna R. Packa Excellence in Writing Award, Karlee Johnson.

Marietta P. Stanton Outstanding DNP Student Award, BJ Haamankuli.

Innovation in Practice Award, Julie Aldridge.

Innovation in Practice Award, Olivia Ann Couch.

August 2016 MSN, DNP and EdD Graduates

Josh Thomas
Johnny Tice
Newton Tinsley

The University of Alabama
The Honor Roll of Giving recognizes gifts received in the fiscal year October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. We value each donor and do our best to ensure that each person is correctly noted on the following pages. If you notice your name was omitted or misspelled, please accept our apologies and contact the Office of Advancement at 205-348-7429 or thbrown4@ua.edu.

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Thank you
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The University of Alabama  
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**Alumni News**

**Class of 1979**
Dr. Karen Nabors was promoted to full professor and awarded tenure at Mississippi University for Women in May 2016.

**Class of 1981**
Gwen Holder has been selected President of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Nursing Informatics Association. She was recently promoted to Director of System Support Services at Vanderbilt University Medical Center where she is responsible for 20 informatics nurses who provide support to the inpatient users. Gwen also conducts bootcamps that help prepare nurses to take the nursing informatics certification exam.

**Class of 1983**
Liz Singer is now working at Brookwood Baptist Health on the Epic team. She completed a Masters of Nursing in Nursing Informatics in 2011 at UAB.

**Classes of 1991, 2008 and 2014**
A peer-reviewed journal article by Dr. Sallie Shipman and colleagues has been selected for *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* fifth annual Innovation Award by SLACK Inc. The article, “Qualitative Analysis of the Lived Experience of First-Time Nurse Responders in Disaster,” appeared in the February 2016 issue of *The Journal*.

**Class of 1996**
Michele H. Talley recently completed her doctoral degree.

**Class of 2002**
Martha Wood has been selected as the Associate Chief Nurse for Mental Health at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center.

Gov. Robert Bentley appointed Amy Shipley Price to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. She is the chief nursing and operating officer at Coosa Valley Medical Center.

**Class of 2003**
Jeanette Mathews Griffey has been a Certified Wound Ostomy Nurse since 2009 with Noland Health Services: Long Term Acute Care Hospital Division.

**Classes of 2003 & 2008**
Melissa Fleming was featured in the *Saint Thomas Health Nurse* magazine for her efforts in reducing hospital acquired infections in critical care units.

**Class of 2004**
Wendy Wells Morris recently began working with Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital serving as the Regional Nurse Liaison for Alabama and the Panhandle of Florida.

**Class of 2007**
Fannie W. Jones is in the military and has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. She is mobilizing to Georgia as a supervisor for Case Management (CM). LTC Jones’ MSN degree from UA is in Case Management.

**Class of 2008**
Lindsay Ballard Capps will complete her Masters from South University as a Family Nurse Practitioner in December 2016. She hasn’t determined her next job move but is excited for the future in this new career path.

**Class of 2010**
Kailey (Hamrick) Davis married Chase Aaron Davis of Montgomery, Ala. She also graduated with her MSN and is working as a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner in hospitalist medicine in Montgomery.

Dr. Connie Hale graduated in 2010 in one of the first DNP classes at the Capstone College of Nursing. Since that time, she has become the Director of Graduate Studies at Northwestern State University of Louisiana, where she helped develop a DNP program for the college which accepted its first cohort of students in 2014. The program is now CCNE accredited, and growing. Additionally, she sat on the Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners (LANP) Board of Directors from 2014 to 2016. Most recently, she was selected as the state’s nurse practitioner participant in Weight First Interprofessional Training and Workshop pilot program, collaborating with the Endocrine Society and three physicians in a program to improve obesity treatment in Louisiana. Dr. Hale is a frequent presenter on topics including Nurse Led Clinics, DNP Roles in Practice, and Obesity Management.

Haley Gullahorn Tusing will graduate in August of 2017 with a Master’s of Science in Nursing – Adult Nurse Practitioner. In June, she had a little boy, Sawyer.
Dr. Shelly Norman just celebrated three years as owner of Regal Skin and Laser, a medical spa located in Chehalis, Wa. She completed advanced training and certification in medical aesthetic lasers and cosmetic injectables.

Class of 2011

Kristi Dempsey has been the Associate Dean of Nursing at Itawamba Community College in Tupelo, Miss. for a year. The previous four years, she served as ADN faculty.

Dr. Kimberly McMurtrey recently accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at the University of South Alabama College of Nursing. She also opened her own clinic (Tri-Cities Health PC) in Johnson City, Tenn. In addition, her oldest son, Killian Brewer, is a freshman at The University of Alabama.

Class of 2012

Lauren Barrera Judkins graduated from Tennessee State University in August 2016 with an MSN. She was recently hired as a family nurse practitioner by Fast Pace Urgent Care in Middle Tennessee.

Dr. Rebecca C. Meyer was recently promoted to Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center. This is the first time a registered nurse has been selected for this position.

Rita Thomas-Sims retired in 2015 from the U.S. Army as an Army Nurse Corps Officer with 22 years of active duty service.

Morgan Smith is in his second year of nurse practitioner school at Georgetown School of Nursing.

Class of 2013

Suzanne Battles Herron was promoted to Director of Clinical Services at Compassus Hospice in Montgomery, Ala.

Katy Merritt works in the Emergency Department as a staff nurse at Novant Matthews Medical Center in Charlotte, NC. After being a staff nurse for only 2 1/2 years, she was recently offered and has accepted a promotion with Corporate Novant as a clinical nurse educator for the Greater Charlotte market with a specialty in emergency services.

Class of 2014

Dr. Jorge A. Delgado is a nurse practitioner in vascular surgery at Duke University and clinical faculty at Duke Graduate School of Nursing. In 2016, he became the Team Leader of all Surgical NP’s and PAs at Duke University Hospital.

After working at Huntsville hospital for a year and a half, Yesenia Rivera, earned the opportunity to serve in the U.S. Air Force as a commissioned officer. There are only a select number of positions for nurses allocated every fiscal year making the process very competitive. After interviews, essays and letters of recommendation, she was informed of her selection in September. She is very excited for this new journey and for the chance to represent the Capstone College of Nursing in the Air Force.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology named Debra L. Sheets to the Board of Examiners for the 2016 Malcolm Baldridge National Quality Award. The Baldridge Award is the nation’s highest honor for organizational innovation and performance excellence. Dr. Sheets is the Director of Organizational Effectiveness at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, Maryland.

Class of 2015

Brittney Alexander was accepted into Samford University’s Nurse Anesthesia master’s degree program starting in January, 2017.

Dr. Carolyn McClerking and CCN faculty member Dr. Felicia Wood authored “Cardiovascular disease: Initiatives to combat the number one killer in African American women veterans,” in Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice, 1-7.

Two former CCN students, Joey Selleck and Emily Shealy, were married on April 23, 2016. Joey is currently pursuing his nurse practitioner degree at the University of South Alabama and Emily was recently added to the neurosurgery team at Children’s of Alabama.

Dr. Lori Stellwag was recently appointed Vice President of the Epsilon Zeta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

Class of 2016

Rudy Sandel was recently promoted to Chief Nursing Officer for Select Medical Hospital in Alabama.

Dr. Reginald Middlebrooks recently published his DNP Capstone project, titled “Effect of evidence-based practice programs on individual barriers of workforce nurses: An integrative review.” CCN faculty member, Dr. Heather Carter-Templeton, is a co-author.

Class of 2017

Colleen Anusiewicz began her nursing career at UAB Hospital on a General Medicine unit. During school clinicals, she quickly realized a passion for geriatrics. The unit she is working on has a large geriatric population, further solidifying her love for the elderly. Colleen applied and was accepted to The Geriatric Scholars Program (GSP), a two year interprofessional program based on NICHE’s Geriatric Resource Nurse Model. Upon completion of the program in 2018, Colleen plans to take the Gerontological Certification Examination in hopes of gaining formal recognition for her specialization.


The University of Alabama
**Kara Gibson**  

*Kara Gibson* joined the Capstone College of Nursing in July 2016 to serve as the Manager of Fiscal Affairs. She received her Bachelor of Science in Accounting from The University of West Alabama.

Ms. Gibson has worked with The University of Alabama for more than 16 years. In her most recent post on campus, she was the Senior Project Accountant for the UA department, Business Administration for Construction and Physical Plant. She also has eight years of contract and grant accounting experience.

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**Betty Key, MSN, RN, CCRN**

*Betty Key* joined the Capstone College of Nursing as an instructor teaching Professional Nursing Practice: Complex Client Systems. Ms. Key received her master’s degree in Rural Case Management from The University of Alabama and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Alabama.

Her nursing career began in 1985 as a licensed practical nurse after which she became an associate degree registered nurse. Ms. Key has worked 28 years as a bedside nurse in critical care serving in many different roles before joining us. She is also certified in adult critical care nursing.

A member of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) honor society, Ms. Key received the Epsilon Omega Chapter Outstanding Graduate Student Award in April 2016.

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**Megan Pfitzinger Lippe, PhD, MSN, RN**

*Dr. Megan Pfitzinger Lippe* is an assistant professor at the Capstone College of Nursing teaching Fundamentals and Health Assessments for Professional Nursing Practice. She has been a registered nurse for over seven years, and earned her BSN, MSN, and PhD degrees from the University of Texas at Austin.

Her nursing practice experience is in adult critical care and cardiovascular critical care nursing. She has taught undergraduate nursing students for over five years, and was the recipient of the Texas Exes Teaching Award from the University of Texas during her first year of teaching.

Dr. Lippe’s research focuses on palliative and end-of-life care education. She also has developed and tested multiple high-fidelity simulations, including a withdrawal of care simulation.

Dr. Lippe is a member of several nursing organizations, including STTI, HPNA, and NLN. She is also the recent Past-President of the Epsilon Theta chapter of STTI at UT Austin, current facilitator of STTI’s Hospice and Palliative Nursing Community of Interest, and serves on STTI's Conference Planning Task Force. She was the featured STTI leader in the September 2015 *STTI Chapter Leader Emphasis*, and her work helped earn the Epsilon Theta chapter the Chapter Key Award in 2015.

24 Capstone College of Nursing
Dr. Todd Smith is the most recent addition to the Capstone College of Nursing faculty. An assistant professor, he will be teaching in the new nursing administration concentration and in our undergraduate leadership course.

Dr. Smith comes to us after serving as Campus Administrator for the UAB School of Medicine’s Montgomery and Selma Regional Medical Campuses. In that capacity, he oversaw the administrative and financial operations for each campus, including several medical clinics and residency programs, as well as 3rd and 4th year medical students from the UAB School of Medicine.

Dr. Smith earned an undergraduate degree in nursing from Auburn University of Montgomery and a Master in Science in Healthcare Administration (MSHA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). After earning his MSHA in 1998, he served in an administrative residency program at a large healthcare system in Mobile, Ala. and later worked for that same health system as a manager for an oncology program. In 2001, he began working for UAB, where he served in a number of administrative leadership positions, mostly within UAB’s School of Medicine. Since 2003, he has taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses in the field of health care management.

In 2011, Dr. Smith earned his PhD in Health Services Administration from UAB. His research interests include organizational configurations, strategic management, and leadership in healthcare systems and medical practice groups.

Dr. Tonya Shanahan joined the faculty of the Capstone College of Nursing in 2012 as a part-time clinical instructor. Becoming a full-time assistant clinical professor in 2016, she teaches Fundamentals of Nursing.

Dr. Shanahan received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the CCN in 1996 and a master’s degree from Mississippi University for Women in the Family Nurse Practitioner program in 2007. She is certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). In 2016, she earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Samford University with a primary focus on improving health outcomes with implementation of health promotion behaviors. Dr. Shanahan has nine years of experience in perioperative/post anesthesia nursing and pain management nursing prior to entering graduate school.

Dr. Shanahan maintains a clinic practice with Maude Whatley Health Services in Pickens County, providing preventative health services along with management of acute and chronic conditions. She has been an active participant in the Health Care for the Homeless Program and the Tuscaloosa Fire and Rescue Service EMS Prevention program. Her professional affiliations include membership in Alabama State Nurses Association, American Nurses Association, STTI and other professional organizations.

Haley Townsend is a full-time clinical instructor at the Capstone College of Nursing. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2009 from The University of Alabama. In 2011, she received her master’s degree with a Family Nurse Practitioner concentration from Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. She is currently enrolled in the Nurse Educator Doctoral Program at The University of Alabama. Mrs. Townsend currently teaches Fundamentals of Nursing.

Mrs. Townsend began her nursing career working in a medical intensive care unit and has additional nursing experience in preventative women’s health. She taught two years in a community college program before joining CCN as a part time clinical instructor in the fall of 2015. Mrs. Townsend’s interests in nursing practice and research include preventative women’s health, new graduate nursing experience and expert nurse attitudes/culture. Additionally, Mrs. Townsend serves as graduate student delegate for CCN, a Wellness Ambassador for the College, and a UA Project Rising Tide Retention and Student Success Initiative representative.
Dr. Susan Appel received the “Western Alabama Outstanding Nurse Educator Award” from the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama (NPAA) on September 30 at the 10th year Annual NPAA Conference. She was also appointed to serve as State Liaison for the Southern Nursing Research Society Board.

Dr. Sheree Carter received the “Recognition of Distinguished Services to the RNS” at the 9th Annual Rheumatology Nurses Society Conference in August in Cleveland, Ohio. She is one of the first nationally to receive certification by portfolio for rheumatology nursing (RN-BC) by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

Dr. Heather Carter-Templeton was appointed editor of the Alliance of Nursing Informatics Connections Column for CIN: Computers, Informatics, Nursing. She was also awarded a one-year grant for “Diffusing Nursing Research in a Nurse Residency Program via a Twitter Online Journal Club” by STTI/Chamberlain.

Dr. Michelle Cheshire was elected Vice President of The Alabama Council of Administrators of Professional Nursing Education Programs (ACAPNEP). Her work on Emotional Intelligence was featured in the UA Research magazine Spring 2016 issue.

Dr. Safiya George and co-investigators, George Mugoya and Billy Kirkpatrick, were awarded a $225,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for “Affordable Housing and Community Advocacy for People Living with HIV: Assessing Best Practices and Health Impact.”

A peer-reviewed journal article co-authored by Drs. Sallie Shipman, Marietta Stanton, Ann Graves, Patricia Speck, Linda Olivet, Stephen Tomlinson, and Douglas McKnight was selected for The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing fifth annual Innovation Award by SLACK Inc.

Dr. Paige Johnson was appointed to serve on the 14-person committee of faculty, staff and students who will oversee the search for a provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at The University of Alabama. The committee is working with a firm on a national search to fill the position by the beginning of the spring semester.

Dr. Alice March received a $2,400,000 grant from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration for “Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students: BAMA Tide to Success for MSNs.” She also received $431,646 for a Nurse Faculty Loan Program.
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Dr. Olivia May received the “2016 Outstanding Nurse Practitioner of the Year Award” from the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Alabama on September 30 at the 10th year Annual NPAA Conference.

Dr. Debra Whisenant was appointed to serve on the Awards Committee of the Southern Nurses Research Society. She also won the Community Collaboration poster competition at the Community Engagement Institute conference held in Birmingham, Ala. in October 2016.

Dr. Justin White was appointed Vice Chair of the New Mexico Board of Nursing: MAAC Advisory Committee.

Publications & Presentations

**PUBLICATIONS**


Publications & Presentations


PRESENTATIONS


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