

# CCN RESEARCH

## Newsletter

Issue 5 Summer 2018



## Faculty Spotlight

**D**r. Barbara Ann Graves, is a professor who earned her PhD in Clinical Health Science in 2007, and has worked here at the Capstone College of Nursing for the past 19 years. Having always been very focused on research, she currently utilizes her various forms of expertise—including cardiovascular health, critical care nursing, and evidence-based practice—to conduct research on health disparities in cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

“I’ve also had to become a bit of an expert on GIS,” she attests. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), of course, refers to a system through which people manage and analyze geographic data, such as the location of various people and services within a particular U.S. county. Using these spatial analyses, Dr. Graves has created a research program designed around investigating the relationship between access to health services and rates of disease mortality. She began using GIS for her dissertation, in which she discovered that people’s distance to cardiac intervention services interacted with factors such as poverty and education to affect mortality due to cardiovascular disease. “In general, people who are more than 30 minutes away are much less likely to use healthcare services and therefore have increased cardiovascular risk.”



Currently, she leads a team of students funded from a grant provided by the Southern Nursing Research Society. Together, they are using GIS to look at how access to care relates to mortality in diabetes in Alabama. The grant has funded students through a course in GIS and the development of a scoping literature review on disparities in diabetes and access to care. As a team, they have also diagrammed locations in Alabama where patients can receive education on diabetes management—a topic that is critically important for a disease that must be constantly monitored with only occasional help from healthcare professionals. Next, the team will be looking at how access to these services differs by age, race, and other demographics.

Despite the importance of her findings, Dr. Graves is most proud of the team-based approach to research she has taken with these students. They have come from a variety of educational backgrounds, including UA's computer-based honors program, nursing, and geography. "I tell my students, you each bring certain skills to the table that are important for this research," she said. The students—Elena Thompson, Laura Canaday, Grace Liu, Jane Kunberger, and Brook Bambis—have each benefitted by gaining skills in both GIS and research more generally, as well as by authoring research presentations. Elena Thompson also won the 2017 UA Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award for her work with Dr. Graves. Currently, the team is working on two manuscripts, a scoping literature review related

to healthcare access and diabetes and the results of the GIS analysis, with students serving as co-authors.

While the team's work is important for understanding how access to care relates to health outcomes, Dr. Graves also sees the potential for this research to influence healthcare policy, in the areas being researched. She notes that some of the data that they work with is linked to political boundaries such as counties and census tracts, allowing the appropriate advocates to know exactly whom they need to target when requesting new services for an area. Results from this type of research can be used with other strategies to reduce diabetes-related mortality and existing healthcare disparities.

Moving forward, Dr. Graves plans to continue this team-based approach with the even larger goal of addressing health disparities within the entire southeastern region of the United States—not just Alabama. With the goal of recruiting new students to this line of work, she has applied for an R15 grant from the NIH's National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

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## Publication Highlight

Cheshire, M. H., Strickland, H. (2018). Distance Learning Teaching Strategies in Registered Nurse to Baccalaureate Nurse Programs; Advancing Cultural Competence of Registered Nurses in Providing End-of-Life Care. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing Journal*. 13(3), 153-155.

Nursing students are now being trained to assist patients with "culturally competent" End-of Life-Care. The American Association of College of Nursing Essentials Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice affirms that "cultural competence is an essential nursing skill." Cultural Competence within the field of nursing involves providing patients from multicultural backgrounds with excellent health care. While nursing students come from diverse backgrounds with diverse health care perspectives, this program will further aid students in learning how to best assist patients with their health care needs.

# Office of Scholarly Affairs

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## Lacye Taylor

**Scientific Editor/Designer**  
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Lacye Taylor is from Tuscaloosa, Alabama and was recently hired as the Scientific Editor and Grant Writer for the Capstone College of Nursing. She previously attended The University of Alabama and graduated from the College of Communication and Information Sciences with a degree in Journalism in 2011. She is interested in Women's health and nutrition, as well as minority and social justice issues. In her free time, she likes to spend time with her daughter, cook, and travel.



## Lauren Calhoun

**Grant and Contract Specialist**  
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Lauren Calhoun first received her B.A. in Public Policy & Community Service and B.A. in History from Emory & Henry College and later went on to receive her Masters in Public Administration from Eastern Kentucky University. She brings eight years of experience to CCN in proposal development, grants management, and federal program administration. Previously, she has worked at Barter Theatre, The State Theatre of Virginia, where she was responsible for researching, writing, and administering local, state, federal, corporate, and foundation grants. Using her skills and experiences, Lauren can provide valuable support and resources to produce successful proposals. In her free time, Lauren loves spending time outdoors, reading, and playing tennis.



## Catherine Johnson

**Program Assistant**  
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Catherine Johnson received her Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from the University of Alabama and brings 10 years of experience in human resources, management, and business finances to the CCN. In her free time, Catherine loves spending time and having fun with her husband and three very energetic children. Born and raised in Tuscaloosa, AL, she is very excited to work for her Alma Mater and we are so excited to have her.



## Lauren Neal

**Graduate Research Assistant**  
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Lauren Neal received her M.A. in Experimental Psychology in 2016 from the University of Alabama and a B.A. in Psychology in 2014 from Lee University. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychology pursuing a PhD in Experimental Social Psychology with a minor in Statistics. She has worked as a graduate research assistant in the Social Cognitive Emotive Neuroscience (SCEN) Lab under the supervision of Dr. Philip Gable since 2014. Her research utilizes electroencephalography (EEG) to study the neural correlates of emotion, motivation, and impulsivity. Lauren is excited to join the OSA team as a graduate research assistant and is looking forward to assisting faculty with their research and statistical needs. In her spare time, Lauren enjoys working out and spending time with her husband and their two dogs.



## Hunter Threadgill

**Graduate Research Assistant**  
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Hunter Threadgill received his B.A. in Philosophy and Psychology at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas and went on to receive his M.A. in Psychology here at The University of Alabama. Currently, he researches the impact of emotion on the neural correlates of goal performance during goal pursuit as his dissertation. Hunter is excited to join the OSA team as a Graduate Research Assistant and will be working closely with many of the faculty in the Capstone College of Nursing to assist with all aspects of the research process.



## Liddy Di Valerio

**Research Assistant**  
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My name is Liddy Di Valerio and I am from St. Louis, Missouri from a family of ten. I am currently a Senior studying Biology with a minor in Studio Art. My career plans are to attend Medical School after this year and eventually become a physician and work in healthcare! I have worked as a Research Assistant here at CCN for the past year and I absolutely love being part of the research process and working with the CCN Faculty!



# Grant Awards

**Lawson, R. (PI).** Advanced Nursing Education Workforce Program. Health Resources and Services Administration. \$1,309,988.

**Lippe, M. (PI) Davis, A. (Co-PI).** Development of an Instrument to Measure Palliative Care Confidence in Undergraduate Nursing Studies. National League for Nursing. \$24,947.

**March, A. (PI).** Jonas Nurse Scholarship. Jonas Foundation. \$10,000.

**March, A. (PI).** Jonas Veteran's Healthcare Scholarship. Jonas Foundation. \$10,000.

**Mumba, M. (PI) Key, Betty (Co-PI).** All of Us: It Takes a Village. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. \$15,000

**Kaylor, S. (PI) Lippe, M. (Co-PI) Woods, A. (Co-PI).** Project Rising Tide: Innovation, Integration, and Active Learning: A Journey into Curricula Redesign. University of Alabama. \$60,000.

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