

University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire Nursing Alumni Newsletter College of Nursing



Greetings from Dean Kristen Abbott-Anderson



Greetings to All!

I hope this newsletter finds you well. This first full year of my time here as Dean has been a busy one. We have experienced many changes inside and outside of our College of Nursing. I'll begin with outside of our College.

Outside of our College the most significant change has been the closure of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) hospitals both in Eau Claire and in Chippewa Falls, and Prevea Health Clinics throughout the Chippewa Valley. These closures had a significant impact on our community and within our College. HSHS has been a long and faithful partner in educating nurses for our community and we value the wealth of experi-

ences our students had during their clinicals at HSHS. Many of our graduates became nurses working at HSHS.

This spring, with the announcement of the closures, we were required to make a quick shift to alternate clinical placements for the 24 undergraduate students directly impacted as well as our DNP students using the Prevea Health Clinic sites. We are truly grateful to our community partners who immediately offered assistance and took our students into clinical sites in addition to the students already planned for their sites.

These closures have spurred us to be even more creative in how we think about clinical site placements. I hope you will enjoy reading in this newsletter about the new clinical immersions we began last fall and that we are expanding for the coming academic year.

Before I shift topics, I want to make one request. As nurses, we have great potential to use our common voice for sharing concerns about our healthcare system. I encourage you to be aware of what is happening to the healthcare systems where you live, and across the country. And when you have concerns, make your voice heard, in local, and in national arenas. With the HSHS closure accounting for over 200 beds no longer available to our community, not to mention key services only offered by HSHS, I

believe the closing of these two hospitals is an alarm bell that we cannot ignore.

Inside the College, we have welcomed new faculty and staff, and offered our farewells to others (see *Transitions and New Opportunities* section). We have also been working on improving our work and learning environments, which has been challenging and a lot of fun.

For the coming year, we know that we will continue to face changes that bring challenges, but I am confident in our dedicated team of faculty and our commitment to our students. We are prepared to face any challenges head on. And, in the midst of these challenges, we will look for joy and opportunities for growth. I wish you the same, that you are well equipped to face any challenges that arise in the coming year, and that you find joy in the process.

One final note—at our request, the University Senate, Chancellor, and Board of Regents very recently approved changing our name from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to the College of Nursing, effective immediately. Be watching as we begin making this change.

Kindly,

Kristen Abbott-Anderson, PhD, RN, CNE
Dean & Professor

Phasing and Transitioning of our Distance Education Site in Marshfield

This past Spring 2024, Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) made the difficult decision to phase out our distance education site in Marshfield over the next two years, with the last cohort graduating in May 2026. During this two-year period, we will maintain the use of the UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield campus, including the simulation laboratories. Following the Spring 2026 semester, we will continue to partner with Marshfield Clinic Health System for clinical learning opportunities in Marshfield, Eau Claire, and other communities. To date, 847 individuals have graduated from UW-Eau Claire through the distance education site.

The leadership at Marshfield Clinic Health System remains committed to supporting the education of our students. Dr. Matthew Jansen, Director of the Division of Medical Education of MCHS hopes they can continue to work with UW-Eau Claire for many years to come. He expressed that “MCHS would like to thank UWEC College of Nursing and Health Sciences for their dedication to educating nurses in our rural communities.”

Dean Kristen Abbott-Anderson noted, “Though this represents a change in how we partner with Marshfield Clinic, the strong relationship we have established over the past several decades remains. We value our shared commitment to educating the future nurses who will serve our Wisconsin communities.” Dr. Rachel Merkel, Director of the Marshfield Site and Nursing Depart-

ment Co-Chair, added that “Through our partnership we have had the unique opportunity in graduating BSN-prepared nurses in Marshfield, many of whom are practicing in the area today. We remain committed to preparing our future BSN graduates to meet the ever-changing healthcare needs of rural Wisconsin.”



The announcement of the phasing out of the Marshfield distance education site comes on the heels of the closures of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire, HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital in Chippewa Falls, and Prevea Health Clinics in Western Wisconsin. With these closures, we have pivoted to utilizing more of the MCHS Marshfield Medical Center hospital units in Marshfield for students located at our Eau Claire campus.

Students from the Eau Claire campus already had been traveling to the MCHS Marshfield Children’s Hospital in Marshfield for pediatric experiences,

as the Eau Claire area is lacking a children’s hospital.

The original partnership to create the distance education site in Marshfield was established with Saint Joseph’s Hospital in 1986, coinciding with the phasing out of its three-year diploma program. In 1987-1988, the first cohort of UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students started taking nursing courses in Marshfield, in the South Building of the Hospital. In July 2017, MCHS finalized the purchase of the Hospital and began supporting our distance education site.

About four years later, in May 2021, we moved out of the South Building (see photo) and set up our nursing program in the Helen Connor Laird Fine Arts Building on the UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield campus. The move was necessary as the South Building was aging and could no longer feasibly be renovated. However, MCHS continued to support us at the new campus, providing funding for moving and renovation costs, leasing of the new space, and faculty and staff to teach at the Marshfield Site, on top of other resources. Although our distance education site location changed, the program remained our UW-Eau Claire Nursing program, with the students graduating from UW-Eau Claire.

We are saddened by the phasing out of our distance education site, but look forward to our continued relationship with MCHS and the rich learning experiences they provide for our students.

Save the Dates—Mary C. and Fred Bliss Contemporary Nursing Seminar, October 24-25, 2024



We are pleased to announce that Dr. Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, PhD, MPH, LCSW, RN, ANP-BC, PMHNP-BC, FAAN, Executive Director for Policy Solutions at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, will be on campus as our inaugural keynote speaker at the Mary C. and Fred Bliss Contemporary Nursing Seminar, October 24-October 25, 2024. He will be speaking on compelling issues around social determinants of health, with his presentation occurring on the evening of October 24th. More information will be forthcoming.

Mary C. and Fred Bliss, longtime donors to the College, recently created the lectureship to support innovative thinking in nursing. The vision is to host an expert in a contemporary nursing related area to enhance knowledge, understanding, and application of a significant topic or issue. Ms. Mary Campbell Bliss is a 1978 alum of the undergraduate nursing program. She and her husband additionally are funding the Mary C. and Fred Bliss University Fellow Endowment for Tenure Track Nursing Faculty to facilitate the scholarship of early-career faculty in the College.

New Clinical Immersion Experience with Essentia Health in Superior

For the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters, we piloted a new immersive clinical experience for students in Superior, Wisconsin at Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital-Superior, a 25-bed critical access hospital. As part of the NRS 428 Clinical Practicum: Nursing Leadership I course, first semester senior nursing students were supervised at the site by Dr. Beth Evans, a UW-Eau Claire Assistant Professor and by Dr. Beth Young, Director of Nursing: Ambulatory and Transitions in Care at Essentia Health East.

The immersive clinical experience provides a valuable learning opportunity as we work to find clinical sites to accommodate the increasing number of clinical groups admitted for the Eau Claire campus. Through Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) grant funding, we have been admitting at least 24 more additional students (three clinical groups) each semester.

NRS 428 is a course with multiple clinical sections from which students select. All are meant to accomplish the same course objectives. Several of the sections involve traveling outside of the Eau Claire or Marshfield areas for enriching multicultural opportunities. For instance, many students from the Eau Claire and Marshfield campuses participate in immersions at the Rosebud Indian Reservation in Rosebud, South Dakota. Others visit dairy farms in counties surrounding Eau Claire to work with Hispanic migrant workers. Some clinical sections, however, are more local and are associated with area health departments and schools.

The NRS 428 clinical course objectives require students to demonstrate leadership skills, apply concepts of quality and safety, and exhibit team building and collaborative strategies. Students were able to accomplish these objectives via a number of experiences through Essentia Health. For the Fall 2023 semester, seven students (see photo) had 3 days of clinical in Superior in September and in October, and two more days in November. The Spring 2024 term likewise involved one two-day and two three-day immersion exper-

iences for students enrolled in NRS 428 for that semester. When not immersed, the students met regularly on the Eau Claire campus with the faculty to complete preparatory and follow-up work for the immersion days.

As part of the Essentia Health experience,



the students rotated through spending a day with each of 7 different nurse leaders (see photo of students with nurse leaders, with Dr. Beth Evans standing far left and Dr. Beth Young seated far left). Students commented on how thankful they were for this unique experience in their education, noting they previously did not have “the opportunity to see nursing through a managerial perspective,” as they tended to be more “at the bedside” for their other clinical rotations. The students praised the nurse leaders as being quite “professional, kind, knowledgeable, and very hard-working,” capable of dealing with so many items on their plates while providing an “incredible experience” for them.

One of the students, Taylor Stanton, described being a bit surprised by the many different roles a nurse leader juggled. Both she and Kailee Lien, another student, were struck by how multiple leaders, for instance, “jumped in and began working alongside the bedside nurses,” rather

than “being bystanders” when a code situation occurred. Consistent with their numerous different roles, “some of the leaders were active among community organizations to help improve the community resources and others were working on implementing a new system for discharge and admission of patients,” according to

Ms. Stanton. Through being alongside multiple different nurse leaders, the students gained

many insights, as what they read or heard about in class was visible in practice. As Dr. Evans noted, their new perspectives on nursing leader responsibilities and activities “will improve their initial role as a bedside nurse, having had a glimpse ‘behind the curtain’ at the complexities of nursing leadership.”

The students particularly realized there was another future career path in nursing open to them and their peers. Ms. Lien acknowledged, “often as students, we are told that nursing can take us in many different directions, but this was an opportunity to view that in real life, which was helpful in thinking about what future career goals might mean for me.” Ms. Stanton similarly felt that “everyone should get the opportunity to see this side of nursing” and that many of the nurse leaders they observed “never really planned to go into leadership, but their paths led them into it and I think some of us [as] future nurses may find ourselves in this same position.”



Students demonstrated their own leadership and collaborative skills through population-based clinical projects that teams of them completed. In Fall 2023, students Kaleb Hafferman, Katie Premeschak, and Jackie Lederer developed a project entitled, *Safe Transition of Care for Dementia Patients*, with the goals of identifying community resources available to patients with dementia, collaborating with the Essentia Health team to build the *Resourceful* tool within the Epic electronic health record, and providing staff education on the tool.

New Clinical Immersion Experience with Essentia Health in Superior (continued)

Another team of students, Claire Goodreau, Taylor Stanton, Kailee Lien, and Adam Kratz, worked on the project, *Dementia Behavioral Episode Dot Phrase*, also in the Fall 2023 term. Their goals and aims were to develop standardized methods for documenting the care of patients with dementia and to create a dot phrase within Epic to chart the inpatient dementia interactions and behaviors.

As part of the clinical projects, students conducted community assessments. For these assessments, Dr. Evans purposely gave the students “just enough information” and prompts or “clues” to encourage them “to discover key factors . . . problems and solutions.” She noted that the “students responded well to these

clues and it was evident that uncovering data, opportunities, and solutions for themselves was more valuable than having it pointed out to them.”

For Dr. Evans, “It was a joy to observe and prompt the students as they developed their team and project management skills in tackling complex projects for Essential Health to improve care” of the older population. As a relatively new educator, she was both surprised and delighted to see the students exceed her expectations in “meeting the course objectives and in the development of deliverables for Essentia Health.”

We are grateful for the generosity and openness of the administrators and staff

at Essentia Health in affording this rich immersive clinical opportunity for the students. Moreover, while the College has been supporting student travel expenses, we are thankful Essentia Health has been providing hotel rooms for students during the experiences.

For the Fall 2024 semester, we are in the planning stages of expanding clinical opportunities with Essentia Health by giving students the option to participate in a pediatrics or obstetrics experience as part of NRSG 447 Practicum: Nursing Care of Individuals, Infants, Children, and Families. This is a clinical course taken by students in the first semester of their senior year. We look forward to these new opportunities.

Exploring Oman Opportunities

This past January 2024, Dr. Meg Lagunas, Associate Professor of Nursing and Director of the Clinical Learning Center in Eau Claire, and a small group of University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire faculty and Chancellor James Schmidt visited the University of Nizway in Oman (see photo, left to right, with Dr. Meg Lagunas, Dr. Bryan Brown from the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department, Dr. Tali Lee from the Biology Department, Dr. Tarique Niazi from the Department of Sociology, Professor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Abdulaziz AlKindi at University of Nizway, and Chancellor Schmidt).



Universities of Wisconsin campuses have been working with the University of Nizway since the early 2000's. For instance, the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy offers an advanced practice rotation in Oman.

In recent years, the University of Nizway has become increasingly interested in health and environmental sciences and further exploring potential collaborative relationships with UW-Eau Claire. It currently has a College of Health Sciences that includes a School of Nursing that offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree option, a School of Rehabilitation and Medical Sciences, and a School of Pharmacy. Dr. Lagunas traveled to Oman with the intention to learn more about the country, culture, and possible opportunities for academic collaborations. More information will be forthcoming if these experiences occur.

Special Thanks to Clinical Agencies, Preceptors, Alumni, & Donors

We extend our gratitude to the many health care agencies and individuals and preceptors at those settings for the wide array of rich clinical and mentorship opportunities they provided for our undergraduate and graduate students. We also appreciate our many donors who funded scholarships for our students, provided funds for our simulation laboratories, enabled clinical and classroom offerings in Eau Claire and in Marshfield, as well as faculty development and recognition opportunities, or supported our general Nursing Advancement Fund. **Thank you!**

Governor Evers Visits College of Nursing

On November 16, 2023, Governor Tony Evers visited with students, faculty, and staff at the College of Nursing. He also toured the Clinical Learning Center (CLC) and even assisted undergraduate student Holly Stanislowski with placing oxygen and a pulse oximeter on a high-fidelity mannequin (see photo below, with CLC Director Dr. Meg Lagunas looking on). The visit was in support of his efforts to invest in higher education, including nursing, and hear about the experiences of students, faculty, and staff. See photos with nursing undergraduate and graduate students (top) and with faculty and staff (bottom).



Transitions and New Opportunities

This past year, we experienced retirements and members of the College moving on to other opportunities. We miss them and encourage them to stay connected with us. All are wished the very best!

Dr. Ann Aschenbrenner, Associate Professor, retired from UW-Eau Claire in



May 2024 after 6 years, having originally joined our College in 2018. Previous positions included teaching at Columbia College of Nursing in Milwaukee, the Chippewa Valley Technical College, and the Online Master of Science in Nursing program at Grand Canyon University. At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she was Clinical Associate Professor and the Master of Nursing Program Director. She is particularly proud of having taught pharmacology at the various institutions for a total of 43 semesters/terms (see photo taken on the first day of class teaching NRSG 245 Pharmacology this Spring 2024 at UW-Eau Claire).

Dr. Aschenbrenner received her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (see photo of her pinning ceremony) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and PhD degrees from Marquette University. She earned the Certified

Nurse Educator (CNE) credential in 2014.

While at UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Aschenbrenner was honored with the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness in 2021. Additionally,



Transitions and New Opportunities (continued)

she was the recipient of a Mary C. and Fred Bliss Endowment for Nursing Faculty Professional Development Award for junior faculty for her research project, *Forgiveness and Civility: Exploring the Relationship of these Concepts in Nursing Education and Practice*.

Besides publishing with a research team on incivility in nursing, she also co-authored works related to facilitating forgiveness. Her research was consistent with her belief in kind words and acts, as exemplified by quotes such as, "Kindness is loaning someone your strength instead of reminding them of their weakness" by Andy Stanley, that she regularly included in her e-mail signature line.

In addition to donating her time to the Altoona Compassion Coalition and the Eau Claire County Humane Association, Dr. Aschenbrenner volunteers as a Registered Nurse at the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic. She previously served on committees with the Wisconsin League for Nursing and Sigma Theta Tau International and chaired the UW-Eau Claire Department of Nursing's Student Affairs and Undergraduate Admissions Committee.

Dr. Aschenbrenner is looking forward to spending more time with her husband—they will be celebrating 40 years in October!! She also is excited to have more time with their four daughters (all are UW-Eau Claire alums) and their families, including 7 grandkids. Plus, she plans to "make lots of quilts", travel, including a planned trip to Maine this summer, and do more volunteering.

Dr. Mary Canales, BSN Completion Program Director and Professor Emerita,



retired in May 2024, after nearly twelve and a half years with UW-Eau Claire. During that time, she was known for the high standards she modeled and maintained for scholarship and for advocating for social justice and equity in health and education.

Dr. Canales initially was a faculty member in our College, teaching undergraduate and graduate students, from January 2009 through May 2017. She then moved to New York and taught in the graduate program at Simmons University, but subsequently returned in Spring 2020 as the BSN Completion Program Director and Professor.

Dr. Canales was not a stranger to the Universities of Wisconsin, having earned her BSN and PhD degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing (see PhD graduation photo outside of the Kohl Center in Madison). Her MSN degree is from Georgetown University.



Besides UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Canales previously taught at Allen School of Nursing in Waterloo, Iowa, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Syracuse University, and the University of Vermont in Burlington where she had been tenured.

She is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards through UW-Eau Claire, including the Women's Studies Feminist Lifetime of Distinguished Service Award, the University Excellence in Service

Award, a Student Affairs Faculty Award of Distinction for Collaboration, and a Women's Studies Faculty Scholarship Award. Additionally, she twice was a Scholar-in-Residence at the Helen C. Whiteley Center at the University of Washington, and was an Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Fellow at UW-Eau Claire, a Helen Glass Researcher in Residence at the Manitoba Centre for Nursing & Health Research at the University of Manitoba, a UW-Eau Claire Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Faculty Fellow, and a Fellow at the Center for Research in Vermont.

A well-respected scholar, Dr. Canales has been the author or coauthor of at least 55 peer-reviewed publications, in addition to multiple invited articles, editorials, and book chapters. Areas of research have included the concept of othering, health disparities, health inequity, social justice, social determinants of health, and food insecurity, among others. She also is a reviewer for several professional journals and is on the Advisory Board for *Advances in Nursing Science*.

Dr. Canales' retirement plans begin with several summer trips including meeting her daughter at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming and house/dog sitting for friends on Lake Champlain in upstate New York. She will also complete an archives project for the Public Health Nursing Section of the American Public Health Association and continue with writing collaborations with colleagues in Washington state. Dr. Canales expressed that, "Time to think, write, and re-write will be very welcome!"

Dr. Gunnar Larson, Associate Director of the Clinical Learning Center and Clinical Assistant Professor Emeritus, retired from UW-Eau Claire at the end of June 2024, after a long history with our nursing program. An alum of our graduate programs, Dr. Larson graduated with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from UW-Eau Claire and with a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. He has both Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees from the University of Minnesota.

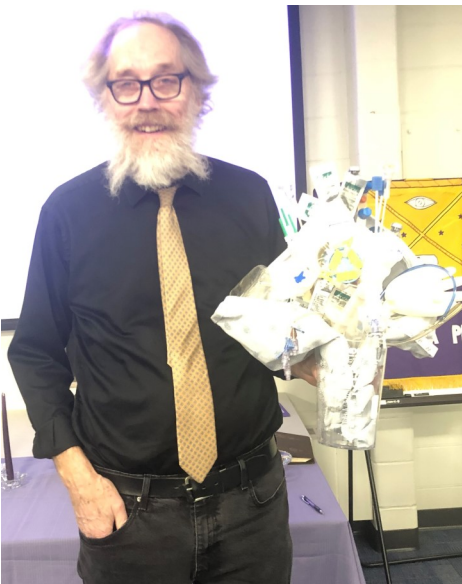
He had been serving the Department, College, and University since his arrival as an MSN student in 2003, when he took on a graduate assistant position. This was just as donors to the College, Jane and

Transitions and New Opportunities (continued)



James Moore, gifted us with our very first SimMan. We briefly stared at the box containing SimMan until Dr. Larson, with his courage, curiosity, and jerry-rigging ingenuity got him working during those early “pioneer” days of high-fidelity simulation, as part of his graduate assistantship and later his master’s degree thesis study.

Upon graduating with his master’s degree, he was formally hired as a clinical instructor and continued to spend the next 18 years with us, leading the way in the use of simulation in the nursing undergraduate and graduate programs. He deserves credit for helping us to embrace



and advance the incorporation of simulation within our programs, both in Eau Claire and in Marshfield, and its interdisciplinary use across campus. Other educators, nurses, and simulation personnel from around the country also have benefited from his knowledge and expertise, shared through numerous local, regional, and national presentations he has given over the years.

During his time at UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Larson was the recipient of multiple awards from the College, including the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award in 2017 and in 2023 and the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction in 2012 and 2020. Most recently, he was the invited keynote speaker for the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma’s annual Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship Day held in April 2024 (see photo).

An active member of the College, he served on the University Senate, the Physical Plant Planning Committee, the Academic Policies Committee, the Nursing Graduate Curriculum and Admissions Committee, and the College Technology and Facilities Committee, among others and was the faculty advisor for the local chapter of the American Association of Men in Nursing. Dr. Larson has been particularly dedicated to the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma, having taken on many formal roles within the chapter, including President-Elect (President starting in Fall), Counselor, Secretary, Membership Committee Chair, and Faculty Advisor for the chapter student group, in addition to considerable behind the scenes work. He deserves recognition for watching over our Chapter, helping ensure that it continues to thrive.

With retirement, Dr. Larson will carry on as President of the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma. He also is looking forward to having more time to spend with his family, including two grandchildren, doing house repairs, and continuing to play his musical instruments. A summer vacation in northwestern Wisconsin (near Hayward) with family and friends also is planned for July.

Dr. Benjamin Bogle, Clinical Associate Professor, returned to clinical practice in Minnesota following the completion of the Spring 2024 semester. He is hoping to be back in practice in the local area and

teaching with us again in the future. Dr. Bogle joined us as an educator in January 2021, and primarily taught physical as-



assessment and nurse practitioner role preparation courses for students in the graduate program, in addition to teaching some undergraduate content, e.g., pharmacology. He utilized his experiences as a family nurse practitioner to provide rich learning opportunities for students. He was always striving to prepare the students to be the best advanced practice nurses they could be and appreciated opportunities to guide them in practice.

His passion for providing quality education was recognized by Mayo Clinic with a Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences (MCSHS) Nurse Practitioner Clinical Education Collaboration Outstanding Faculty Member Award at a MCSHS virtual graduation ceremony in 2021. From the College, he received the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction in 2022 and the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award in 2023.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Bogle served on the board of our local Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma and often volunteered to assist colleagues and the College as needs arose. Dr. Bogle originally graduated with a DNP degree from our program. Appreciation is extended for his service to our College and profession and we wish him much success with his clinical practice and hope to see him back.

Transitions and New Opportunities (continued)



Ms. Sue Smith, Clinical Instructor at the Marshfield Site, left at the end of the Fall 2023 semester to continue her work as the Director of the Wood County Health Department, along with managing a housing rental business with her husband. She is an alum of our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program. Ms. Smith had been teaching public health clinical sections for NRSG 428 Clinical Practicum: Nursing Leadership I at the Marshfield Site since 2017. Her considerable expertise and supportive and valuable work with the students over the years were appreciated and highly regarded.

We are grateful for the many years all of these individuals have dedicated to the undergraduate and graduate students and for their service to the College, to the communities, and to the profession. Thank you!!!

Welcomes and New Appointments

We have been quite delighted this past 2023-2024 academic year to welcome several new individuals to our College. In Fall 2023, we were joined by **Dr. Stephanie Cloutier**, Clinical Assistant Professor; **Ms. Jennifer Gottfredsen**, Clinical Instructor from Mayo Clinic Health System; **Ms. Jeanne Lewandowski**, Clinical Instructor; **Dr. Jodie O'Donnell**, Clinical Assistant Professor; **Mr. Andrew Prevenas**, Clinical Learning Center Technical Integration Engineer; and **Dr. Mimi Sward**, Clinical Assistant Professor.

In October 2023, **Ms. Theresa Curtis** started as the Dean's Assistant in Eau Claire and **Ms. Kaylan Petrie** began as the Marshfield Site Administrative Coordinator. **Ms. Tami Joles**, Clinical In-

structor; **Ms. Amy Meyer**, Clinical Instructor at the Marshfield Site; and **Ms. Erica Sherman**, Clinical Assistant Professor at the Marshfield Site, joined us for the Spring 2024 semester.

Dr. Gail Hanson Brenner transitioned from a Clinical Assistant Professor role to a tenure track Assistant Professor position for Spring 2024. Dr. Hanson Brenner received her undergraduate and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degrees and Post-MSN Nursing Administration Certificate from UW-Eau Claire. She earned her PhD in Nursing Education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. Dr. Hanson Brenner began teaching undergraduates in the College in 2005 and has been an advisor for students in the BSN Completion Program.

Dr. Lorraine Smith, Assistant Professor, was named Director of the BSN Completion Program following the retirement of Dr. Mary Canales. Dr. Smith is quite familiar with the BSN Completion Program, having served as the BSN@Home Statewide Program Director from 2008-2012. UW-Eau Claire's BSN Completion Program is part of the statewide BSN@Home program that includes nursing degree completion programs offered through UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Eau Claire. Additionally, Dr. Smith was a Senior Student Services Coordinator and Assistant to the Dean/Associate Dean from 1993-2015, roles that involved advising and working closely with students in the BSN Completion program.

Honors, Recognitions, Awards, and Notable News

We are proud to share the excellence demonstrated by the students, faculty, and staff of the College of Nursing, and by our alums (see photo of the College faculty and staff taken at the August 2023 College opening meeting held in Davies Center on campus). High-lights of many who were recognized this past year include:

Two promotions were announced at the August 2023 Department meeting, including **Ms. Stephany Andres** to Clinical Assistant Professor at the Marshfield Site and **Ms. Catherine Wildenberg** to Clinical Assistant Professor. Ms.



Honors, Recognitions, Awards, & Notable News (continued)

Wildenberg has been serving as the Prelicensure Academic Success Coordinator in Eau Claire and Ms. Andres is the Prelicensure Academic Success Facilitator in Marshfield.

Dr. Stephanie Hill, Clinical Instructor at the Marshfield Site, earned a DNP degree from Capella University in May 2023.

Dr. Rachel Pierce, Assistant Professor, along with students **Jenna Hinden** and **Allison Urbanski**, received a Gritzmacher Science Education Fellowship from the UW-Eau Claire Foundation in September for their science outreach project, *Community Education about Healthy Relationship Promotion and Various Contraceptive Methods*. The students and Dr. Pierce received small stipends for the 2023-2024 academic year that enabled them to carry out the work.

Dr. Gail Hanson Brenner, Assistant Professor, was elected president of the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA). She assumed the presidency following the association's annual meeting on January 19, 2024. Dr. Hanson Brenner has a long history of serving WNA in various positions at both the state and District 10 level. Additionally, she is the faculty advisor for the Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association (ECSNA) in Eau Claire.

Two nursing faculty were recognized at a March 4, 2024 celebratory event at UW-Eau Claire. **Dr. Dalete Mota**, Professor, was awarded the Nancy Quinn Senior University



Fellow in Nursing Award, a \$12,500-a-year award for five years for senior career nursing faculty in the College. Dr. Mota will utilize the award to continue her oncology-related research in an

effort to advance patient care and nursing practice. She will work to strengthen her international research collaborations while involving UW-Eau Claire colleagues and students. **Dr. Beth Evans**, Assistant Professor, received the Mary C. and Fred Bliss



faculty in the College. Dr. Evans is planning to use the funding to support two areas of her scholarship, including continuing to develop an innovative clinical leadership immersion experience for the first semester senior nursing students and also to examine the self-care skills of nursing students.

Several faculty and instructional academic staff members were honored with awards from the College at the May 16, 2024 College meeting. **Dr. Der-Fa Lu** received the Ihle Family Award for Caring; **Dr. Mohammad Alasagheirin** the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness; **Ms. Cassandra Ndlovu** the Patricia M. Ostmoe Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction; **Dr. Lisa Schiller** the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award; **Dr. Theresa Dachel** the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award; and **Ms. Melissa Gullickson** the Dean's Award for Administrative Professional Excellence.

Also at the May College meeting, **Ms. Catherine Wildenberg** received the Colleen and Tom Nevins College of Nursing Faculty Development and Scholarship Award. The award is to be used for assistance in earning a PhD or DNP degree, research towards achieving tenure, and scholarship activity. Ms. Wildenberg is pursuing a PhD at Villanova University, M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing.

Dr. Lorraine Smith, Assistant Professor, along with a team, received a Marshfield Clinic Health System Outstanding Partner in Community Health Award on May 23, 2024 at the Regional Northwoods Coalition meeting in Marshfield. The award was in recognition of their work on the Eau Claire Health Alliance Substance

University Fellow Endowment for Tenure Track Nursing Faculty, a \$12,500-a-year award for three years for early-career Nursing



Misuse Action Team. Dr. Smith co-chaired the team with Ms. Renee Sommers (At The Roots, LLC), with workgroups led by Eau Claire City-County Public Health Professionals Alison

Harder (Alcohol Workgroup) and Sarah Dillivan-Pospisil (Drug Workgroup).

Mr. Nicholas Burgdorf, a junior student in the traditional baccalaureate program in Eau Claire, was awarded a summer internship position in the Government Affairs and Policy department of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The internship involves working remotely for a minimum of 20 hours per week, from July 8th to August 30, 2024. Key responsibilities and activities include gaining knowledge about academic nursing from a federal policy perspective, assisting with hearings, briefings, and other events on Capitol Hill, and helping with newsletters, letter writing, and other AACN publications.

Ms. Holly Stanislawski, who graduated with a BSN degree from UW-Eau Claire on May 18, 2024, received a Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) Future Nursing Leader Award at our Nursing Convocation (pinning) ceremony held on May 17th. While a student, Ms. Stanislawski demonstrated active leadership in the Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association, the Newman Student Association Leadership Team, the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma, and the Dean's Convocation Planning Committee; was a Student Nurse Ambassador for the College; and participated in faculty-student research, among other activities.

The WNA award includes a complimentary year of membership in the Wisconsin Nurses Association and an appointment to a WNA council or committee of her choosing. Ms. Stanislawski has accepted a position at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit. See photo of

Honors, Recognitions, Awards, & Notable News (continued)



Ms. Stanislawski receiving the award from Dr. Gail Hanson Brenner, WNA President.

Ms. Lara Beranek, a December 2013 BSN alumna of the Marshfield Site, was



awarded the 2023 Wisconsin Association of School Nurses (WASN) Kathryn Etter School Nurse of the Year Award at the WASN Conference held in April 2023. Ms. Beranek (see photo) works for Marathon County Special Education (MSCE), through which she covers three districts—Edgar, Marathon, and Rosholt. Additionally, she facilitates the Central Wisconsin School Nurses group.

The award is a testament to her love of school nursing, as “Every single day that I am in one of my buildings, I find joy in being around the students. They make me smile, laugh, and sometimes cry, and I just love them. Being a school nurse is so much more than what many people think. My work helps ALL children have the possibility to attend school!” She further acknowledged that “working with educators is wonderful. My workplaces are filled with fabulous, caring, dynamic, intelligent, and hard-working people.” Ms.

Beranek deserves congratulations for the award and appreciation for her dedication to school nursing and the students.

Ms. Pam (Foxy) Albee, MSNed, BSN, RN and **Ms. Kari Schmidt, MS, BSN, RN, NPDA-BC**, two 1980 BSN alums, were guest speakers at an April Eau Claire Student Nurses’ Association meeting in Eau Claire (see photo, pictured from left to right, Ms. Pam Albee, ECSNA President Elizabeth Vedbraaten, and Ms. Kari Schmidt). It was an honor to have them at the College. They spoke about the



value of their BSN education and their journeys of continued growth in the art and science of nursing and their career passions. They shared personal stories

and experiences from various nursing specialties, discussed how healthcare has changed over time, and provided advice to new nurses on how to prevent new-graduate burnout, in addition to giving tips on how to build one’s nursing career.

Ms. Albee’s clinical practice experience has included operating room, burn unit critical care, pediatrics, urgent and emergent care, emergency department triage, and hospice. She earned a Master of Science in Nursing Education degree from Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah. Over the years she was honored with both nursing practice excellence and outstanding clinical teaching awards. Besides providing nursing staff and telehealth patient education, she served as an adjunct faculty member at Westminster College. Additionally, she has participated in several Operation Smile mission trips.

Ms. Schmidt’s areas of practice have been acute care, home care, long term care, rehabilitation, and hospice. She earned a Master of Science in Administrative Leadership and Supervision in Adult Education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and has written multiple articles on interprofessional and adult education and contributed to several nursing textbooks, including the *160th Anniversary Edition of Notes on Nursing* by Florence Nightingale. She served as Co-Editor of the *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, was President of the Association for Nursing Professional Development (ANPD), received the association’s Marlene Kramer Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020, and was CEO and trainer for her own consulting firm, Training for Impact.

We were grateful to have them reach out to talk with the students, lending words of advice and encouraging and supporting them in attaining their career goals and being open to opportunities in nursing.

Eau Claire Student Nurses’ Association

The Eau Claire Student Nurses’ Association (ECSNA) in Eau Claire and in Marshfield continued to be actively engaged in serving fellow students and their communities during the 2023-2024 academic year. Dr. Gail Hanson Brenner is the faculty adviser for ECSNA in Eau Claire and Ms. Stephany Andres is the faculty adviser in Marshfield.

This past Fall, the ECSNA in Eau Claire participated in numerous activities that aided students as well as the larger community, including making tie blankets for Family Promise of Chippewa Valley (Beacon House), creating holiday cards for Dove Healthcare West and South residents (see



Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association (continued)

photo 1), volunteering at the Foot and Nail Clinic and at the Adopt-a-Block event in which they picked up trash following Homecoming (see photo 2).



in assisted living homes, conducted fundraisers and collected socks and supplies to

create period packs to fight Period Poverty at the Rosebud Indian Reservation (see photo 6), took part in the Adopt a Highway trash pickup program (see photo 7), held apparel sales, ran a food drive for and volunteered in the Rotary Winter Wonderland holiday lights display in Wildwood Park, and provided a dinner at Ronal McDonald House (see photo 8). Additional-



In Spring, they made tie blankets for Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota (see photo 3) in addition to donating money for car seats for families in Rosebud, and volunteered at Community Table in Eau Claire, a Red Cross Blood Drive, the Eau Claire Marathon, and at Oakwood Health Services. Additionally, they planned and hosted the Fall 2023 Nursing and



Healthcare Career Fair, held stethoscope and apparel sales, provided a peer mentorship program for pre-nursing students, and assisted with the orientation for newly admitted undergraduate nursing students. Similar to prior years, they brought in multiple guest speakers throughout the year (including Ms. Pam Albee and Ms. Kari Schmidt) and participated in Nurses Day at the Capitol (see photo 4).



ly, they hosted multiple guest speakers and participated in a Teddy Bear Clinic event for kindergarteners at Spencer Elementary in November and a Teddy Bear Clinic at Washington Elementary School in Marshfield in Spring in which they read the book, *Sick*



Simon, and demonstrated with the children how germs can spread.

Like the students in Eau Claire, those at the Marshfield Site were also active. This past Fall and Spring, members of the Marshfield Site ECSNA created holiday cards and Valentine's Day cards (see photo 5) for people residing



