

# University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire Nursing Alumni Newsletter

College of Nursing and Health Sciences



## Greetings from Interim Dean Sonja J. Meiers



Interim Dean while we search for our permanent Dean of the College. The Search Committee has been appointed and we are eager to welcome a new leader within our midst soon.

You will see that I am also serving as the Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor and am intentionally implementing a researcher administrator role. The talented educators and staff in the College have been extremely supportive to me in my service. In fact, Associate Dean Debra Jansen, Chair Charlotte Sortedahl, and Director of Assessment and Evaluation Jeanette Olsen have each responded to the call to increased administrative duties with grace and creativity.

The College continues to consider the needs of students first in everything we do and provide engaging learning experiences in collaboration with our clinical partners. We do this while innovating with new models of course delivery, practice competency assessment, and expansion of enrollment to meet workforce needs. Dean and Pro-

fessor Emerita Linda Young, my immediate predecessor, has created a solid College team that respects the value of diverse perspectives and is ready to manage current and future challenges. A celebration will be held in her honor on August 24th.

Times may change but excellence is always in fashion at UW-Eau Claire! As individuals, our students, faculty, and staff achieve individual goals and together, we meet our collective goals.

We welcome you to our [College of Nursing and Health Sciences website](#) at all times to “catch up” on what is happening. We would also like to hear about the lives of our alumni and [welcome your news at all times](#). On behalf of the College, I wish you the very best in all you are doing to make a difference in our world.

Sincerely,  
Sonja J. Meiers, PhD, RN, AGCNS-BC, FAAN  
Interim Dean and  
Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing  
Research Professor

It is my distinct honor to greet you, our valued Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff, and Friends, as the Interim Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire!

I have had the privilege of meeting and working with the impressive graduates of UW-Eau Claire over the 45 years of my nursing career and now have the distinct opportunity to contribute to that legacy. I was appointed Acting Dean on January 31 and have now been appointed Inter-

### Save the Dates

**October 27, 2022, 3:00-5:00 p.m.: Clinical Partnership Day—Essentials for the Future Nursing Workforce** (virtual). Event to acknowledge our gratitude, provide program updates, and learn from clinical partners about essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support education to practice transitions. Clinical partners will be sent a detailed agenda and an RSVP request in September.

**May 3, 2023: DNP Project Day.** DNP students present their DNP Projects, followed by a reception.

**May 5, 2023: Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship Day.** Watch for a call for abstracts in early spring.

## Honoring Dean Emerita Linda Young as She Retires



Dean and Professor Emerita Linda Young retired at the end of June 2022 from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences after nearly 11 years of service to the College and University. In January 2022, she resigned her position as dean to devote her time and energy to state advocacy and to her research on nurse retention and persistence.

She wrote at the time, “The challenges to recruit, educate, and graduate more nurses in Wisconsin have never been greater. There remains much work to be done across our state to create more effective support and collaborations in service to our profession. I am looking forward to being able to devote my time to this effort, with thanks to my colleagues and our students who continue to inspire me with their dedication and commitment. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences will always remain an important part of my professional career and, more personally, a very fulfilling part of my life.”

Dean Emerita Young took an administrative sabbatical leave for the Spring 2022 semester, which enabled her to continue to chair the implementation committee for the \$5 million state-funded Nurse Educator Loan Program. While Dean, Dr. Young had worked with members of the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) and the Administrators for Nursing Education in Wisconsin (ANEW) to allocate \$5 million as part of the Nurse Educator Loan Program within the Wisconsin State

Budget. The Loan Program, which is intended to increase the supply of nurse educators in Wisconsin, provides fellowships for nursing students (see <https://heab.state.wi.us/>) in Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree programs, in addition to post-doctoral fellowships and education loan repayment assistance to be used to recruit nursing faculty. Award recipients commit to teach in a Wisconsin school of nursing for three years. The program is modeled after the \$3.2 million Nurses for Wisconsin initiative, funded through a 2013-2015 UW System Economic Development Incentive Grant, which she led.

Other highlights of her tenure as Dean included working with the College to develop and implement two strategic plans, successful reaccreditations by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and navigating two large budget cuts and a pandemic. She also secured deeper partnerships with Marshfield Clinic Health System in Marshfield and Mayo Clinic Health System.

Dean Emerita Young was passionate in her leadership work, particularly in legislative activities aimed at advancing nursing and healthcare issues. Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Patricia Kleine noted, “In her tenure at UW-Eau Claire, Dean Young has moved into state and national prominence in part due to her tireless efforts to elevate the nursing profession and advocate addressing issues in health care, especially those issues facing nursing. Her prominence amongst the colleges and universities in the state, which offer nursing programs and licensure, was evident in the statewide leadership opportunities proffered to her. Arguably Dean Young, in her decade of service, became the face of nursing education in Wisconsin.”

Besides her leadership with the Nurse Educator Loan Program and the Nurses for Wisconsin Initiative, she served as the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) State Grassroots Legislative (SGL)

liaison for Wisconsin, was president of ANEW, led the team producing the *Wisconsin Nursing Education and Nurse Faculty 2018 Survey Report*, and spoke at numerous legislative breakfasts in Wisconsin and at Wisconsin Nurses Day at the Capitol. Plus, she was a CCNE evaluator. Dr. Young also currently provides leadership in the International Family Nursing Association as Co-Chair of the Resource Advancement Committee.

Additionally, she, along with the University Foundation Office, worked with numerous donors to the College over the years, forming strong relationships that aided in attaining funding for student scholarships, resources for our Clinical Learning Center, and support for faculty professional development. For instance, Mrs. Jane Weibert Moore (class of 1973) and Mr. James Moore created the Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor position; and Mrs. Mary Bliss (class of 1978) and Dr. Fred Bliss established the Mary C. and Fred Bliss Endowment for Nursing Faculty Professional Development award for junior faculty.

Dr. Young began serving as Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UW-Eau Claire in August 2011, after 15 years at the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE). Along with being a faculty member, she assumed various roles at MSOE, including co-leader in the creation of a new BSN program, Program Director for the BSN program, Clinical Liaison, and Family Coordinator.

In addition, prior to her career at MSOE, Dr. Young taught at the Milwaukee County Medical Complex-School of Nursing and at Alverno College of Nursing. Besides being a Project Nurse for a year in the 1980s at the National Heart and Chest Hospitals in London, England, she worked as a staff and charge nurse at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa and at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Milwaukee.

While at MSOE, she developed a

## Honoring Dean Emerita Linda Young as She Retires (continued)

health care partnership between that nursing program (and later for a time with our program at UW-Eau Claire) and communities in El Salvador, thereby enabling culturally immersive clinical and volunteer experiences for nursing students.

In terms of her own education, Dean Emerita Young earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from UW-Milwaukee, a Master of Science in Nursing degree from Marquette Univer-

sity, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from UW-Madison School of Nursing.

She was the recipient of numerous honors, including being inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in 2020. Some other recognitions were a Wisconsin Nurses Association-Signe Skott Cooper Image of Nursing Award, a UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing Distinguished Alumni Award, and a UW-Eau Claire College of Nursing and Health Sciences Ihle Family

Award for Caring.

We are grateful for the service Dr. Young provided to the College and to the profession these many years. As Provost Kleine expressed, she hopes “she can look back to her many accomplishments as the administrative leader of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences with a sense of pride.” We wish Dean Emerita Young well in her retirement, with plenty of quality time with her family.

## Goodbyes and Wishes for Happy Retirements

This past academic year was met with far too many retirements and goodbyes. All will be missed.

**Dr. Pamela Guthman**, Assistant Professor, retired in December 2021 after beginning her academic career at UW-Eau Claire as a Clinical Assistant Professor in August 2017. Dr. Guthman is an alumna



of the School of Nursing, having earned her BSN degree from UW-Eau Claire; she received a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Guthman taught in both the undergraduate and graduate programs, with a focus on community and public health. She is recognized for her public and rural health expertise, having worked as a public health nurse with the Chippewa County Department of Public Health, in addition to a number of other positions with various agencies, including serving as the Chief Executive Officer for the Indi-

anhead Community Action Agency in Ladysmith, Wisconsin.

Dr. Guthman was no stranger to UW-Eau Claire over the years. She briefly was a Clinical Agency Coordinator for our College and was an Outreach Specialist/Nurse Program Planner for the Continuing Education Office. Prior to teaching at UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Guthman was a clinical assistant professor in 2016-2017 at UW-Madison School of Nursing.

Dr. Guthman is known for her advocacy and policy work, having served on countless speaker panels, committees, and coalitions. In addition to multiple oral and poster presentations for conferences and organizations, she contributed numerous articles and interviews for the media on areas ranging from the health effects of climate change, the social determinants of health and health equity, to rural health disparities, among others. Through a Gritzmacher Science Education Fellowship she was able to mentor an undergraduate student in partnering with a local newspaper that served rural communities in northern Chippewa County. Together the student and she provided several articles pertaining to health and environmental and climate issues.

Dr. Guthman received multiple awards from the College over the years, including the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award in 2021, the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award in 2018, and the Friends of Nursing Education Award in 2012. A sampling of numerous other honors are a DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses from UW-Madison School of Nursing; a Community Service Award from the Wisconsin Nurses Association; and a President's Award from the Wisconsin Community Action Agency Association.

With the greater flexibility afforded by retirement, Dr. Guthman plans to focus more on family and advocating for rural populations, health equity, and issues related to climate health.

**Dr. Amanda Seeley**, Associate Professor, returned to clinical practice after the Fall 2021 semester. She began teaching with us in the Fall of 2016, both in the undergraduate and graduate programs and was a nursing faculty member in the Human Development Center (HDC) on campus. She is an alumna of our traditional under-



graduate nursing program, having earned her BSN at UW-Eau Claire, and later she completed Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees at the University of Minnesota.

Even while teaching at UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Seeley maintained her clinical practice as a pediatric nurse practitioner with Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare in St. Paul, Minnesota. She primarily taught in courses focused on the care of children and families and also leadership at the

# Goodbyes and Wishes for Happy Retirements

undergraduate level, and leadership, health policy, and health assessment at the graduate level. The undergraduate senior students appreciated her supervision of pediatric clinical experiences at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare.

While at UW-Eau Claire, Dr. Seeley received a number of awards through the College, including the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness in 2020 (along with Dr. Sarah Conlin); the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction in 2019; and the Mary C. and Fred Bliss Endowment for Nursing Faculty Professional Development for junior faculty in 2018 for her research project, *Care Coordination Interventions and Outcomes for Children with Medical Complexity*.

As part of her scholarship efforts, she worked with teams of faculty, students, and others on pediatric care coordination and also the use of simulation to practice professionalism and family-centered care. Consistent with her expertise and scholarship, she was one of the authors of the National Association for Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNP) position statement on supporting the transition from pediatric to adult-focused health care.

**Ms. Karen Sohn**, Clinical Instructor, took a teaching position closer to her home after the conclusion of the fall 2021 semester. Ms. Sohn was an alumna of our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program and had taught with us from 2017-2021. Her primary focus was on the nursing care of women, infants, children, and



families, but she also taught in a medical surgical nursing course for the second semester junior nursing students.

Ms. Sohn has extensive clinical practice experience in hospital, home health, nursing home, and community environments, in areas including medical, general surgical, labor and delivery, postpartum, nursery, emergency, orthopedic, neurosurgical, ambulatory, pre-op and post anesthesia recovery, long term care, home health, and hospice nursing.

During her time as a clinical instructor, Ms. Sohn engaged in service activities including being a member of the Nursing Assessment and Evaluation Committee for the Department and participating in a college task force that produced the Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCN) *Wisconsin Nursing Education and Nurse Faculty 2018 Survey Results*.

**Dr. Sarah Conlin**, Clinical Instructor, resigned her position at the end of the Spring 2022 semester. Ms. Conlin began teaching with us part-time in January 2019. She taught sections of NRSNG 447, an undergraduate pediatrics clinical course in which she provided experiences for first semester senior students at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare in St. Paul, Minnesota. Along with Dr. Amanda Seeley, she received a Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness from the College in 2020.

**Ms. Jan Adams**, Senior Media Specialist and Learning Resource Center Coordinator, is retiring in August 2022. She joined our College in 2012, after working for 12 years as the Director of Media Services for Cooperative Educational Service Agency 10 (CESA 10), in Chippewa Falls. Prior experiences encompassed working for the Chippewa Falls Public Library, the New Auburn School District, and the Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington, Minnesota. Throughout her career, including at UW-Eau Claire, she authored or co-authored multiple grants, one of which was the \$3.2 million Nurses for Wisconsin initiative, funded through a 2013-2015 UW System Economic Development Incentive Grant led by Dean Emerita Linda Young. The grant was intended to ease the nurse faculty shortage through providing financial support for doctoral and post-doctoral education and faculty loan forgiveness. She was a co-author on a professional journal pub-

lication related to the grant initiative.



During her years in the College, faculty and staff greatly appreciated her artistic skills as she crafted flyers and advertisements for conferences and recruitment needs, wrote news pieces for the college website, and created videos to showcase or mark events, including one to honor and remember those lost during the time of the pandemic. She also helped students in designing professional poster and PowerPoint presentations.

Ms. Adams was and continues to be dedicated to professional and community service. For instance, she was a UW-Eau Claire Senator, a Liaison for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, a member of the Friends of the Chippewa Falls Public Library, and the Secretary/Treasurer for the Grace Lutheran Foundation.

With her retirement, Ms. Adams is looking forward to "transitioning to a life with a little less work and a lot more fun." She certainly deserves it!!

**Ms. Jane Hauger**, Clinical Instructor, and **Ms. Lois Slattery**, Teaching and Technology Assistant at the Marshfield Site, both retired for a second time at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 semester. Ms. Hauger retired for the first time from teaching with us in May 2016. Ms. Slattery originally retired from her position as Senior Media and Technology Specialist and Distance Education Coordinator within the College in January 2017. We wish them the best, again, with their second retirements from the College, but wonder if we can try for a third round.

## Welcomes

Although we were saddened to say goodbye to too many people this past year, we were quite pleased to greet several new members in our College.

In August 2021 we welcomed a few new clinical track instructors to our Eau Claire campus, including **Dr. Chelsea Collins**, Clinical Assistant Professor; **Mr. James Locke**, Clinical Instructor; **Ms. Cassandra Ndlovu**, Clinical Instructor; and **Dr. Tamara Tasseff**, Clinical Associate Professor. **Dr. Sara Collins**, Clinical Assistant Professor, joined us at our Marshfield Site.

For the Spring 2022 semester we welcomed **Ms. Kirsten Dieckman**, Clinical Assistant Professor, to our Eau Claire campus.

**Ms. Julie Bove** joined our College in December 2021 to provide undergraduate program support after the departure of Ms. Sheryl Gonzales at the end of July 2021. Ms. Bove previously worked as a student services coordinator with the tutoring program in the Academic Skills Center on campus.

**Dr. Sonja J. Meiers**, Interim Dean and Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor, started her positions within the College in late January 2022.

Dr. Meiers earned a Diploma in Nursing from Lutheran Deaconess School of Nursing, a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of St. Teresa, a Master of Science degree from Winona State University, and a PhD degree from the University of Minnesota. She most recently had been the inaugural chair and a professor of the Department of Graduate Nursing at Winona State University in Rochester, Minnesota. Please read more about Dr. Meiers in the article related to the Moore Nursing Research Professorship.

**Dr. Rachel Pierce**, Assistant Professor, was hired into a tenure-track position that began in April 2022. Dr. Pierce is an alumna of our traditional undergraduate program and received a Master of Science degree with a Family Nurse Practitioner focus from Purdue University Global and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Frontier Nursing University. She is helping to support the teaching of pediatrics in the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

**Dr. Linda Sargent**, Clinical Assistant Professor, will be transitioning to a tenure track Assistant Professor position for Fall 2022. Dr. Sargent received her undergraduate nursing degree from Viterbo University, a Master of Science in Management and Organizational Develop-

ment degree from Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, and Master of Science in Nursing Education and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from Viterbo University. She began teaching undergraduates in the College in 2012, primarily in second semester senior level clinical courses and in medical terminology and leadership and management classes.

**Dr. Marie Walsh**, Clinical Assistant Professor, will begin a tenure track Assistant Professor position starting in Fall 2022, in Marshfield. She has been teaching with us at the Marshfield Site since the Spring of 2020. Dr. Walsh earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Chamberlain College in Minneapolis, and Master of Science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from Walden University. Her teaching experiences at UW-Eau Claire have been in courses pertaining to the foundations of professional nursing and leadership and systems. Additionally, she has been teaching students in acute care clinicals pertaining to adult and older adult populations.

We have been grateful to have these talented individuals in our College, educating future nurses and advanced professional and clinical practice nurses.

## You Make a Difference

*You Make a Difference*, an informal networking and celebratory event in honor of Nurses Month, was held on May 10, 2022 in Eau Claire and on May 12<sup>th</sup> in Marshfield. We received a small UW-Eau Claire mini-grant to support student engagement activities intended to help build connections between students and faculty and staff within departments. The money funded celebratory treats.

As part of the event, the nursing faculty and staff engaged with students and colleagues at interactive roundtables that addressed resilience and self-care strategies; career pathways and professional development;

community engagement activities; student-faculty research opportunities; recognition of achievements; and student support services.



In Eau Claire (see photos, courtesy Andy Hanson) we were graced with the presence of Chancellor James Schmidt, Interim Assistant Chancellor for Strategic Partnerships and Program Development Mike Carney, Interim Dean Sonja Meiers, and the nursing leadership and staff who stopped by to staff or visit the various

roundtables and chat with the students. At least 65 undergraduate and graduate nursing students and faculty and staff enjoyed socializing, engaging with each other, and delighting in sweet and healthy treats. Interim Dean Meiers, Department Chair Charlotte Sortedahl, and Marshfield Site Director Rachel Merkel also visited with students and faculty and staff at the Marshfield Site on May 12<sup>th</sup>.



## Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor

We have been quite excited to have Dr. Sonja J. Meiers, PhD, RN, AGCNS-BC, FAAN join our College



in January 2022 as the inaugural Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor. Mrs. Jane Weibert Moore (1973 graduate of our undergraduate nursing program) and Mr. James Moore originally created our first donor-supported faculty chair position in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences in 2018. The chair position later was converted to and readvertised as a research professorship in 2021, to better coincide with the needs of the College.

The professorship was established to recognize and promote the ongoing research development of a nurse scientist at UW-Eau Claire. The recipient is granted time and resources to further develop their own research program while also promoting the scholarship of the students and faculty within the nursing department. This is a limited term appointment of three years.

As part of the professorship, Dr. Meiers is developing relationships within the College and across the University, in addition to collaborative research ties with community agencies such as Mayo Clinic Health System and Marshfield Clinic Health System.

Dr. Meiers' research interests span the areas of family nursing care and family health, including the influence of substance use disorder on family health, the chronic illness experience for families, and nurse-patient and family member interaction. Her work encompasses theory development, measurement development and testing, and community-based participatory research methods. She has expertise in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research and has mentored numerous master's degree and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students and collaborated with faculty, interprofessional colleagues, community members, and students on scholarship and research projects.

She has more than 30 publications in peer-reviewed journals, in addition to chapters in books, and has presented internationally, nationally, and regionally. Dr. Meiers was awarded numerous external grants, including a \$1.7 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for which she was a co-investigator.

Her most recent positions have included serving as the Inaugural Chair of the Department of Graduate Nursing and Professor at the Winona State University College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She provided leadership in the development of the new Department of Graduate Nursing and had been Director of the Graduate Programs in Nursing there. While at Winona State University, Dr. Meiers provided leadership both as the master's degree advanced practice programs were transitioned to the DNP degree and the adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner (NP) and psychiatric-mental health NP programs were developed. Additionally, Dr. Meiers previously held faculty positions with Minnesota State University, Mankato, School of Nursing.

Dr. Meiers' clinical experiences are

varied, with selected activities including being a neurology nurse, a pediatric nurse, a school nurse, a program coordinator and parent educator, and a home care nurse, among others.

Dr. Meiers earned a Diploma in Nursing from Lutheran Deaconess School of Nursing, a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of St. Teresa, a Master of Science degree in Nursing from Winona State University, and a PhD degree in Nursing from the University of Minnesota. Selected representative honors she received included being inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in 2020, an American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Elevating Leaders in Academic Nursing Fellowship in 2020-2021, and a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/AACN Innovations in Graduate Population Health Curriculum Award in 2016.

With the resignation of Dean Emerita Linda Young in January 2022, although Dr. Meiers was hired as the inaugural Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor, she graciously assumed the role of acting dean of the College from January 28 through June 30, 2022 and later the interim dean role.

Despite being busy with the dean responsibilities, Dr. Meiers prioritized meeting with each faculty member within the College this spring semester to learn about their scholarship interests and their needs for resources to support their scholarship. She is looking forward to assisting members of the College with advancing their research and scholarship through targeted research professional development activities. A search is underway for the Dean position, with the goal of having the position filled by January 2023, thereby enabling Interim Dean Meiers to engage more fully with the Professorship.

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

We extend our gratitude to the many health care agencies and individuals and preceptors at those agencies 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!*

## Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Grant— Helping to Meet the Needs of Rural Communities in Wisconsin

This past December, Governor Tony Evers announced that UW-Eau Claire received a \$9.4 million grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) through the agency's Workforce Innovation Grant program. The 3-year award is meant to address the needs of rural communities in the areas of health care, education, and small business development. It is being headed by Interim Assistant Chancellor for Strategic Partnerships and Program Development Mike Carney and College of Education and Human Sciences Dean Carmen Manning.

As part of the grant, Nursing is charged with increasing enrollment in the traditional undergraduate program in Eau Claire by 24 students (3 clinical groups) each semester (48 students per year); we were admitting about 40-43 students per semester, prior to the grant. Consistent with admitting more students and the intent of the grant, we have been establishing Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) in rural communities as a means to help manage the large student numbers. Although we already had clinical experiences in rural critical access hospitals, it is hoped the exposure of additional numbers of nursing students to the hospitals will entice students to consider employment in rural communities upon graduation.

A DEU is a floor or unit of a health facility devoted entirely to nursing students from a single program, typically from one level within the program. It is staffed by clinical nurse teachers (CNTs) who are staff nurses in the facility who receive professional development to support their

teaching roles. The students sign up for shifts with the CNTs. Nursing faculty at UW-Eau Claire are still responsible for being available for consultation and concerns, making site visits, and grading and evaluating the students.

To date, a DEU has been launched at Mayo Clinic Health System - Chippewa Valley in Bloomer, a critical access hospital. Ms. Stacey Stafne, Clinical Assistant Professor, and Ms. Christine Zimmerman, Clinical Instructor, have been championing the DEUs as they supervised 27 first semester junior nursing students (3 clinical groups) this past spring. Scheduling the student shifts was challenging, as students worked both days and nights, including weekends and the faculty had to ensure the shifts did not interfere with classes. Students also were required to have a break of at least 8 hours off duty between clinical and any class. Ms. Stafne and Ms. Zimmerman coordinated their own schedules to make sure one of them was available for on-call coverage during all the student shifts, including those on weekends. Ms. Stafne and Ms. Zimmerman reported that the student feedback has largely been positive, and they are using the student comments and educator experiences to make future learning experiences even better.

Additionally, funding is being used to support greater use of simulation, including the purchasing of more equipment and software to help manage the increased undergraduate enrollment. A simulation technician and an audio-visual technician are being hired to support expanded simulation experiences.

As another component of the WEDC grant, 10 nurses will receive tuition support to complete our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) nursing education program. In accepting the financial support, the recipients will be required to teach at UW-Eau Claire for two years. The MSN program, which currently is taught in a hybrid format involving a mix of face-to-face on-campus and online class days, is being converted to an all-online program for the didactic (non-clinical) courses. Please contact Dr. Catherine (Kitty) Kenney (kromricc@uwec.edu), Post-Licensure Admissions Coordinator, for more information regarding the MSN nursing education assistance and other MSN/DNP tuition aid (via Nurse Educator Loan funding) for those interested in teaching.

Finally, the WEDC grant is being used to support the initial planning stages of developing a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner degree program option to increase access to mental health providers, particularly in rural areas. Creating this distance-delivered learning option means we will be hiring a tenure-track Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) faculty member to assist with developing the curriculum and teaching courses. A part-time nationally certified PMHNP will also be hired to develop mental health clinical sites and identify preceptors for the graduate students in the program.

We are appreciative of what the grant and area health care agencies can provide to support our undergraduate and graduate students, nursing education, and our rural Wisconsin communities.

## 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 Health Sciences, and by our alums. Highlights of many who were recognized this past year include:

Several faculty and instructional academic staff members were honored with awards from the College in August 2021 in a virtual meeting of the College at the start of the 2021-2022 academic year.

**Dean Emerita Linda Young** received the Ihle Family Award for Caring; **Dr. Ann Aschenbrenner** the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and

Scholarliness; **Ms. Jane Hauger** and **Ms. Vickie Zietlow** the Patricia M. Ostmoie Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction; **Dr. Dalete Mota** the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award; **Dr. Lorraine Smith** the Sue Peck Holism and Integrative Therapies Award; and **Dr. Pamela Guthman** the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award.

Additional awardees from the College were recognized at the August meeting. **Ms. Catherine Wildenberg**, Prelicensure Academic Success Coordinator, received the Colleen and Tom Nevins Col-

lege 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 in the process of pursuing a PhD at Villanova University, M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing.

**Dr. Lorraine Smith**, Assistant Professor, was the recipient of the Mary C. and Fred Bliss Endowment for Nursing Faculty Professional Development Award for junior faculty for her research project, *Educating Adults Working with Adolescents on Electronic Nicotine Device Sys-*

## Honors, Recognitions, Awards, & News (Continued)

### tems to Inform Adolescents.

A number of promotions were announced in August 2021, including **Dr. Charlotte Sortedahl** to Professor and **Dr. Rachel Merkel** to Professor. **Dr. Jeanette Olsen** and **Dr. Amanda Seeley** received tenure and were promoted to Associate Professor.

**Dr. Jeanette Olsen**, Associate Professor and Director of Assessment and Evaluation, received a University Excellence Award in Teaching at the academic year



opening meeting of the University on August 24, 2021. In their nominations, students praised her for her ability to utilize different learning modalities to meet their needs and for her desire to see them succeed and reach their full potential. She has been teaching in the Department of Nursing since August 2020. As part of the recognition, Dr. Olsen received a University medallion and \$1,500, funded through a donor gift.

**Twenty-eight DNP students** (see photo taken on their last class day) and **two MSN Students** presented their culmi-

minating DNP Projects and Scholarly Projects, respectively, on Wednesday May 4, 2022 via an in-person DNP Project and MSN Scholarly Project Presentation Day held in the Nursing Building. The DNP students conducted literature reviews and



developed and implemented quality improvement/evidence-based practice approaches to improve outcomes in health care. The MSN scholarly projects focused on research participation or research utilization, e.g., through literature synthesis and proposal development.

**Ms. Jackie Ganser**, who graduated with a BSN degree from UW-Eau Claire on May 21, 2022, received a Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) Future Nursing Leader Award at our Nursing Convocation

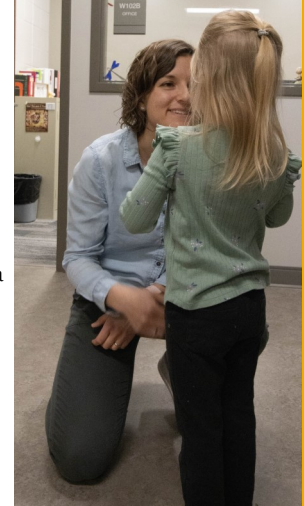


(pinning) ceremony held that day. It was presented by Dr. Christine Bakke, a member of the WNA Board of Directors (see photo). The award includes a complimentary year of membership in the Wisconsin Nurses Association and an appointment to a WNA council or committee of her choosing. Ms. Ganser has accepted a position working in an ICU in Boulder, Colorado.

**Ms. Jenny Sauve** (née Hermsen, undergraduate class of 2009), is a school nurse featured in *A Day in the Life: A Photo Essay of the Wisconsin School Nurses and the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Ms. Sauve has been a school nurse with the Spring Valley School District since 2018. The photo essay project was presented in a webinar on National School Nurse Day, May 11, 2022, and incorporated both video inter-

views and photographs of nine school nurses from Wisconsin schools.

The stories of the nurses were powerful as they described what it was like to be a school nurse during the pandemic, including the emotional and physical toll it took on them as they, similar to many nurses in various settings across the globe, worked countless extra hours. Nurses like Ms. Sauve worried about the safety of the children and problem solved how to get food to them when the schools were physically closed. As the pandemic evolved, she determined how to implement and carry out local public health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines in addition to contact tracing. Throughout the challenging experience, Ms. Sauve worked to be a peaceful presence and a consistent person for the children as well as a resource for staff and the community.



More information about the project and the photos and videos of the nurses are available at this link: <https://www.wischoolnurses.org/a-day-in-the-life>. Dr. Teresa DuChateau, DNP, RN, a school nurse consultant and owner/cofounder of School Health Associates, was the photographer and project director and took the photo of Ms. Sauve. The project was funded in part by a Wisconsin Humanities grant, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and The State of Wisconsin.

**Dr. Sherrill (Dodsworth) Smith**, a 1985 alumna of our undergraduate nursing program, received a UW-Eau Claire Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award as part of the University's October 2021 Homecoming festivities. The award is to recognize service to the community, state, or nation in a manner that brings credit upon the recipient and the university. Dr. Smith is



# Honors, Recognitions, Awards, & News (Continued)

Dean and Professor of the Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, a position she has held since 2019. She earned a master's degree in Nursing Education and Community Health from Wright State University and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nursing Education from the University of Northern Colorado-Greeley.



Before serving as dean at the University of Wyoming, Dr. Smith held assorted teaching and administrative positions at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, including that of Director of the Graduate

Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Concentration, Director of the Pre-Licensure BSN Program, and Assistant Dean of the Undergraduate Programs.

She has multiple publications and presentations to her credit, particularly related to the use of simulation for teaching disaster skills and promoting veteran student success in nursing education.

Prior to her work in academia, Dr. Smith served in the Air Force, from which she retired in 2011 with the rank of colonel. In 2005 she was honored as Air Force Nurse of the Year. Dr. Smith credits her undergraduate education and leadership in the UW-Eau Claire Student Nurses Association (ECSNA) as influential in her many subsequent career accomplishments.

**Dr. Pamela White**, a 1982 graduate of our undergraduate nursing program and a 1989 graduate of our Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, received an Alumni Distinguished Achievement

Award at the December 2021 commencement ceremonies. She has been the chief nursing officer for Mayo Clinic Health



System Northwest Wisconsin since 2012. Besides her leadership within Mayo Clinic Health System, Dr.

White has served on the Wisconsin Board of Nursing and the Wisconsin Hospital Association Board. A strong advocate for nursing education, for the past several years, she and her husband have supported undergraduate nursing students in the College through the Pamela and David White Nursing Scholarship.

## Sigma—Delta Phi Chapter

The Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma, formerly known as Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, stayed active throughout the pandemic. Whereas the prior two Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship Days were virtual, an in-person conference was held on May 6, 2022 in the Davies Center on the UW-Eau Claire campus. Those unable to attend in person were offered the option to Zoom for the welcome and keynote talk.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Heidi Lindroth, Senior Associate Consultant, Nurse Scientist, and practicing critical care nurse with Mayo Clinic Health Sys-

tem in Rochester, Minnesota (see photos with Chapter President Dalete Mota in purple and faculty/instructors in audience). In her talk, *Nursing Rooted in Science, Transforming Practice and Outcomes*, she spoke about her experiences with AGILE, a model for implementing evidence-based healthcare solutions into practice.

As part of the conference, we were treated to 12 oral presentations and 10 posters. A new member induction ceremony immediately followed the conference (see photo). Sponsors included Mayo Clinic Health System, Oakleaf Surgical Hospital, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.



## Settling in Well at New Marshfield Site Location as the Old South Building is Torn Down

As noted in the July 2021 Nursing Alumni Newsletter, our distance education site in Marshfield moved in May 2021 from the South Building of the Marshfield Medical Center to the Helen Connor Laird Fine Arts Building on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point at Marshfield campus.

The South Building was to be torn down during the summer of 2021, as it no longer could be feasibly updated according to Dr. Matthew Jansen, Director of the Division of Medical Education of Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS). The move and demolition were part of a multiyear renovation plan for the entire Marshfield

Medical Center campus that had been discussed for several years. Although new construction on the South Building site will likely not occur in the very near future, other buildings are being remodeled, for instance, to create a new combined emergency department/urgent care unit.

Demolition of the South Building was a bit delayed but did occur in November and December of 2021. See the attached photos of the demolition of the South Building, taken on December 1<sup>st</sup> (top, courtesy Dan Vanden Busch) and Decem-

ber 14<sup>th</sup> (bottom, courtesy Kari Vanden Bush, Academic Department Associate at the Marshfield Site).

Although we are situated on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point at Marshfield campus, the MCHS continues to



provide for our distance education program, including leasing the space and funding faculty and staff to teach at the Marshfield Site, along with contributing other resources. It remains the UW-Eau Claire nursing program and the students are UW-Eau Claire nursing students. Dr. Jansen expressed that MCHS is “dedicated to education and to the UW-Eau Claire College of Nursing and Health Sciences” and

supporting us at our new location. He believes this has been “a good move for the college, the students, MCHS, and the community.”

Throughout this past academic year, students and faculty and staff have been settling in well to the new location. Students attended classes in-person and participated in simulations and skills laboratory activities in the new Clinical Learning Center (see photo). Students also took advantage of the new spaces, such as the Student Success Center, Commons area, and STEM Building, to congregate for student organization meetings and to study and socialize.

Dr. Rachel Merkel, Professor and Director of the Marshfield Site, echoed Dr. Jansen’s belief that the move has been positive, as students have expressed their appreciation of the new site’s more “academic” environment. Students continue to have their clinical experiences at the Marshfield Medical Center.



## Student Organizations in Marshfield and Eau Claire

As we have been emerging out of the virtual world with students having returned to in-person classes, the student organizations in Marshfield and in Eau Claire have been increasingly busy, particularly

in supporting the community and their peers.

At our distance education site in Marshfield, we have chapters of the Eau Claire

Student Nurses’ Association (ECSNA), the Optimist Club, and Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF), with Ms. Vickie Zietlow serving as the faculty adviser for the first two organizations and Ms. Stephany An-

## Student Organizations in Marshfield & Eau Claire (cont.)

dres providing advising for NCF. ECSNA hosted guest speakers, held Popcorn Thursday and apparel sale fundraisers, and participated in a Highway Cleanup (see photo 1). ECSNA and the Optimists also teamed up for a Mission Nutrition event. Additionally, the Optimists held a can pull tab drive to benefit the Ronald



McDonald House situated across from the Marshfield Medical Center in Marshfield (see photo 2) and made meals for families with children in the hospital (see photo 3). Students in the three organizations worked together on a Band-Aid Drive to benefit the Marshfield Medical Center



pediatric unit, a Treats and Trivia Event, and a book drive to assist local families.

Likewise, the students in Eau Claire were quite active in supporting the community

and their fellow students. The Eau Claire campus has chapters of ECSNA, the Optimist Club, and the Assembly for Men in Nursing, with Ms. Gail Hanson Brenner



serving as the faculty adviser for ECSNA, Dr. Jodi Arriola advising the Optimist Club, and Dr. Gunnar Larson advising the Assembly for Men in Nursing. The Optimist Club and the Assembly for Men in Nursing student organizations are in the process of re-engaging members, following the pandemic.

The ECSNA in Eau Claire hosted 9 speakers and sold nearly \$5,000 worth of stethoscopes to new undergraduate students, in addition to running apparel sales, supporting 31 vendors at the annual Nursing and Health Care Professional Career Fair, and participating in Nurses Day at the Capitol.

Besides these events, ECSNA members in Eau Claire volunteered to organize, assist with, or participate in numerous other activities, including the Homecoming Parade; providing a panel and booth (with prizes) for the *Solving a Puzzle: Nursing Professional Association Event*, in conjunction with the Delta Phi

Chapter of Sigma; a Self-Care session also with the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma; a *Human Trafficking: What Nursing Students Need to Know* forum; creating and distributing heart health posters throughout the Nursing Building; making Valentine's Day cards for residents at Heritage Assisted Living & Memory Care (see photo 4); Suicide Prevention and Awareness Research Collaborative (SPARC) Training; picking up litter in the community as part of the Amazing Eau Claire Clean Up; contributing many hours to the Eau Claire



Warming House; organizing a clothing drive for Afghan arrivals at Fort McCoy; providing a mentorship program for new students and a peer-to-peer initiative; and collecting items for the *Wisconsin Foster Closet: Christmas for Kids Program* (see photo 5).



We are thankful for the laudable efforts of the Eau Claire and Marshfield student organization leaders and members to serve and make a positive impact for our communities.

## Nursing Programs Reaccredited by CCNE



In celebratory news, in November 2021 we received notification that our baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master's degree program in nursing, and Doctor of Nursing Practice program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire had been re-accredited for 10 years, extending to December 31, 2031. The accreditation is through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 887-6791.

The CCNE Board of Commissioners determined that our programs met all four accreditation standards and that there were no compliance concerns. The accreditation standards pertained to program mission and governance, institutional commitment and resources, curriculum and teaching-learning practices, and assessment and achievement of program outcomes.

As part of the accreditation process, we submitted a self-study document in which we described how we met their quality standards and hosted a virtual site visit March 10-12, 2021. We appreciate the many clinical agency representatives, leaders, alums, and students who took time to meet with the site visitors. Accreditation requires the support of everyone—thank you!

