

University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire Nursing Alumni Newsletter

College of Nursing and Health Sciences



Greetings from Dean Kristen Abbott-Anderson



Greetings to Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff, and Friends of the College.

I am honored to be sending my greetings to you for the first time as Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. In my first six months at UWEC, I have been the recipient of support in my transition to this role. I am grateful to Interim Dean Sonja Meiers for her mentorship and assistance in my onboarding. We are so fortunate to have outstanding staff and faculty here who are committed to our students, to their learning experiences, but equally, if not maybe more importantly, devoted to caring for our students as individuals. This was evident to me even during my interview process. This commitment to students is one of the qualities that drew me to UWEC.

I was also impressed with the drive to engage students early on and throughout their time in our programs with research. As a professor with my former learning institution, this was a passion of mine. Having mentored over

15 undergraduate students prior to coming to UWEC, I am excited to continue supporting and encouraging these mentoring relationships. Our Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor, Dr. Sonja Meiers, will be a champion in this work and will be able to provide tangible support to faculty mentoring students. I look forward to working closely with Dr. Meiers in her role.

There are many others within the College of Nursing who are instrumental in the overall functioning of the College. We are blessed with many staff and faculty who have stepped up to take leadership roles. When I first arrived, one such individual was Dr. Charlotte Sortedahl. Dr. Sortedahl was asked to step into the Chair role just as the COVID-19 Pandemic was beginning. Despite this challenge, and the challenging times that ensued, Dr. Sortedahl served the Department and the faculty well. I don't believe any of us could fully understand the circumstances she faced in navigating this new role in a large and complex nursing department all within the context of managing the constant changes and demands of living in a pandemic. After three years in the Chair position, Dr. Sortedahl made the decision this spring to step down and return to her professorial role. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Sortedahl for her leadership as Chair and appreciation for helping to make my first semester at UWEC a positive experience.

Dr. Sortedahl's decision to step down provided us an opportunity to explore other leadership models within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. In

recognition of the size and complex needs of our nursing program, we decided to shift from a single chairperson model to one where three individuals share the chair role. As with any change, we will be actively monitoring the positive and any detrimental aspects of this change, adjusting as needed. I am pleased to share that Dr. Arin Van Wormer, Director of the traditional BSN program, Dr. Lisa Schiller, Director of the Graduate Programs, and Dr. Rachel Merkel, Director of our Marshfield Site will share the chair role beginning this summer. I want to publicly recognize these leaders and their willingness to step into this new role. Already, I see an eagerness to work together for the good of the College and for our students. I am hopeful that by sharing the role of chair, there will be more of a balance; a balance between program and site needs, a balance for faculty who will, I hope, feel more connected with their designated chairperson, and for an overall sense of improved work-life balance.

As I close this first greeting, I wish to express how excited I am about our future and the work we will be able to accomplish. I have already had the wonderful opportunity to meet with alumni, emeriti faculty, and others of you who continue to be committed to and engaged with our college community and I look forward to future opportunities to meet with you. If you are in the area, please reach out to me. I value the connections we make. Until next time, I wish you well.

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

Advancing our Undergraduate and Graduate Nursing Programs Forward

Although challenging, we continued to move forward with opportunities to enhance our undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. Some of these opportunities included a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) grant; adapting our curricula to the latest American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials* document which outlines a competency-based approach model and framework for nursing undergraduate and graduate education; and new immersive clinical experiences for students with Essentia Health in Superior, Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Grant Funding

As reported last year, UW-Eau Claire received a \$9.4 million grant from 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.

At the undergraduate level, as part of the grant, Nursing is charged with increasing enrollment in the traditional undergraduate program in Eau Claire by 24 students (3 added clinical groups) each semester (48 additional students per year). Previously we were admitting about 40-43 students every semester, prior to the grant. Accommodating the 60% student increase has necessitated looking for creative solutions for clinical placements, including the use of simulation and other types of clinical arrangements.

For instance, for clinical placements, we have been piloting a limited number of Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) or modified versions of DEUs at select clinical sites. A DEU is a floor or

unit of a health facility devoted 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—these shifts could include days, nights, and weekends. UW-Eau Claire Nursing faculty are still responsible for being available (on call) for consultation and concerns, making site visits, and grading and evaluating the students.

This past year, DEUs were utilized by junior level students at Mayo Clinic Health System – Chippewa Valley in Bloomer, a critical access hospital. A modified DEU in which the units were not devoted entirely to UWEC students was set up at Mayo Clinic Health System – Northland in Barron.



Accommodating the larger undergraduate class sizes has compelled greater use of simulation. This has entailed using WEDC grant funding to purchase additional software and simulation equipment (e.g., a new childbirth manikin—see photo of Dr. Ann Aschenbrenner, a high-fidelity Lucina manikin, and CLC Director Dr. Meg Lagunas) and the hiring of Ms. Morgan Stelter, a simulation technician. Remodeling of the Clinical Learning Center (CLC) space has also been necessary to facilitate the learning and practice experiences of the large class sizes. In partic-

ular, some dividing walls were removed in the CLC space over the winter break, with removal of the remaining dividing walls occurring this summer.

The need for space has not been limited to the CLC—two of our three distance education rooms in Eau Claire are not large enough for the increased class sizes and therefore students and faculty have had to utilize distance education classrooms across campus, particularly in the Centennial Hall Building. On top of the space issues, having more clinical groups of students and students with varying clinical schedules necessitated changing how some courses are offered. We are utilizing more hybrid teaching for the didactic (non-clinical) courses, with students having part of their course hours face-to-face in the classrooms and the remaining hours being taught asynchronously online. The asynchronous hours provide greater scheduling flexibility, free-

ing up times that can be used for clinical hours.

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs likewise are experiencing changes in light of the WEDC funding. As part of the grant, the MSN program for students interested in nursing education or nursing administration/leadership and management is being transitioned to a primarily online program, with the exception of the clinical practicum courses.

Instead of meeting face to face in the classrooms, MSN students are being taught using more of a hybrid format involving a few face-to-face days, but mostly content taught asynchronously online with some remote synchronous days. The intention is to better accommodate working students with family obligations, thereby making the program more accessible. Because most of the MSN courses are included in the early semesters of the DNP program, the changes in the MSN teaching meth-

Advancing our Nursing Programs Forward (continued)

odologies are likewise affecting the means by which the DNP courses are offered.

The WEDC grant also provides tuition loan support for MSN students at UW-Eau Claire, with the requirement that the recipients must teach at UW-Eau Claire or another accredited nursing program in Wisconsin after completion of the degree. They would have up to four years following graduation to teach a total of at least 12 semester credits, upon which the loan would be forgiven. Funding is available for up to 10 students. Individuals interested in learning more about this funding option are encouraged to contact Dr. Catherine (Kitty) Kenney (kromricc@uwec.edu), Post-Licensure Admissions Coordinator.

Additionally, as part of the WEDC grant, we are exploring psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) graduate options. Individuals certified as PMHNPs interested in faculty or instructor positions are encouraged to contact the College or see the Employment website: <https://www.uwec.edu/job-postings/>

As the graduate courses are being transitioned to online/hybrid formats and in the spirit of continuous quality improvement, faculty are utilizing this opportunity to make needed curricular changes to better meet the educational needs of the students. For instance, a credit was removed from a graduate theory course and added to a physical assessment course for which students had long been feeling the need for more content and practice time. Additionally, faculty are working to adapt our graduate curricula to the latest American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) *Essentials* document which outlines a competency-based approach model and framework for nursing education.

Adapting to a Competency-Based Approach Model and Framework for Nursing Education

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences is a member of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and

our programs are accredited by their arm, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). In April 2021, AACN members endorsed *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*, with the expectation that implementation by schools would take three or more years. The AACN *Essentials* details the necessary curricular content and expected competencies of graduates from baccalaureate, master's, and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree programs. It replaces prior *Essentials* documents. Information regarding the new AACN *Essentials* can be found at this website: <https://www.aacnursing.org/essentials>



The *Essentials* requires undergraduate and graduate nursing programs accredited by CCNE to utilize a competency-based approach to nursing education. AACN has been hosting webinars and providing toolkits to assist member schools with the change. Prior to the adoption of the *Essentials*, faculty had already begun planning for the transition. Dr. Jeanette Olsen, Director of Assessment and Evaluation, has volunteered to lead and guide the planning and implementation activities. A goal for the 2021-2022 year had been to map the domains of the *Essentials* document to our undergraduate and graduate curricula—this was successfully completed by the faculty and instructional staff.

The undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees used the mapping information to identify areas to strengthen

within our programs. With this knowledge, faculty and instructors have been working to ensure incorporation of the content in courses and identifying means of evaluating student competence. For this past 2022-2023 academic year and continuing into the coming academic year, a task force of ten faculty and instructional academic staff have been leading the incorporation of the *Essentials* domains and concepts into our curricula.

University funding has been secured to provide competency-based education professional development for the faculty and instructional staff for the 2023-2024 academic year. During this time, we also expect to approve new program student learning outcomes based on the *Essentials*, to be effective beginning in Fall 2024.

Essentia Health

For the fall 2023 semester, we will be piloting an immersive clinical experience for students in Superior, Wisconsin at Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital-Superior, a 25-bed critical access hospital. First semester senior nursing

students will be at the site, for a few days at a time, along with a nursing faculty member from UW-Eau Claire and a doctorally prepared nurse from Essentia Health. The students will have a critical access hospital experience, in keeping with the WEDC grant intentions of meeting the needs of rural communities, while also seeing different services as patients transition through varying coordinated levels of care.

Essentia Health will be supporting the students and faculty member during their stay in Superior. This immersive clinical experience will provide a rich, invaluable learning opportunity as we accommodate the increasing number of clinical groups admitted for the Eau Claire campus. We are excited and grateful to start this immersive clinical in the fall.

Transitions and New Opportunities

Once again, we were met with a number of faculty and staff retiring or moving on to other opportunities, both within and outside of the College. We miss those who have left us and encourage them to stay connected with our College. We wish everyone all the very best.

Ms. Ann Boberg, Clinical Instructor, retired from UW-Eau Claire in December 2022 to take a position as Associate Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences at Minnesota State College South-East Technical and Community College. She had been teaching



with us for the past 10 years, having started in September 2012. Ms. Boberg primarily taught in acute care clinical courses and in our simulation and skills laboratories. While teaching, she continued to work for many years in emergency and urgent care departments, utilizing her expertise to provide rich student learning experiences. Ms. Boberg previously was a staff nurse in a small rural area where she worked with patients in hospital, nursing home, home care, and clinic settings. We congratulate her on her new position.

Dr. Chelsea Collins, Clinical Assistant Professor, left our program following the completion of the Spring 2023 semester. Dr. Collins taught with us beginning in Fall 2021, in both undergraduate and graduate courses, including a first semester senior clinical offering and physical assessment for the nurse practitioner students. During her time with us, she became certified as an advanced forensic nurse through the Forensic Nursing Certification Board. This was in addition to her certifications as a clinical nurse specialist, emergency nurse, and sexual assault nurse examiner. In 2022, she was recognized by the Emergency Nurses Association as a "20 under 40" honoree.



Dr. Collins has experience as a travel nurse, forensic nurse examiner, clinical nurse specialist in emergency and urgent care departments, and staff nurse in various emergency, neurotrauma ICU, pediatric, and home care settings in Colorado, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. We appreciate her work with us for the past two years.

Ms. Donna Shellenberger, Clinical Instructor, retired in December 2022 after having been with us since January 2012. She primarily taught the sophomore nursing students in long term care/rehabilitation settings as part of their very first clinical experiences and then worked with them again in their final semester of the program. Ms. Shellenberger felt her biggest reward has been watching them progress through the program from beginning to end and then seeing some of them after graduation out in practice. The sophomore nursing course "can be overwhelming for the students and I have always told them that by the end of the semester they would 'get it'. That has always been the case." Nursing wasn't the original career path for Ms. Shellenberger as she taught kindergarten for several years before going into nursing and can remember when the "lightbulb" went on for six-year-olds who learned to write their name or count to 100. "That is what it has been like teaching nursing students at UWEC. The 'lightbulb' goes on and by the end of the semester they can do a head-to-toe assessment and pass meds. That has been the best part of



teaching at UWEC (other than the great colleagues I have worked with)."

Others also benefited from her teaching and clinical expertise as she was a CNA instructor and online nursing instructor for numerous years for other programs. During her varied career, she also worked as a nurse with older adults and people with disabilities in assisted living, memory care, long term care, and home care settings, in addition to serving as an RN case manager, health care coordinator, director of nursing, PM supervisor, rehab unit manager, and a nurse consultant, among other roles. When not at work, she and her family were active with the Eau Claire Children's Theatre for 20 years. She performed in about 50 shows, was a prop master for ten years, and is now the Recording Secretary for the Board of Directors. Although Ms. Shellenberger is retiring from UWEC, she is continuing to work in home care and as a CNA instructor. We are grateful for her many years with us.

Dr. Jennifer Sperl, Assistant Professor, left us in January 2023. She had been teaching with us at our Marshfield Site since Fall 2020, after completing her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at UWEC in May 2020. She taught nutrition for the sophomore nursing students and skills and acute care clinical experiences for first and second semester junior nursing students. She has moved on to another position as a hospitalist with Marshfield Medical Center. Prior to teaching with us, Dr. Sperl had been a CPR, EMT, and nursing clinical instructor, in addition to having attained nursing experience in critical care and other staff nurse positions. We wish Dr. Sperl much success in her clinical practice position.

Ms. Victoria (Vickie) Zietlow, Clinical Assistant Professor Emerita and Marsh-



Transitions and New Opportunities (continued)

field Site Clinical Learning Center Coordinator, retired in May 2023. She originally began with our College in January 2013 as part of a pilot project with Aspirus Wausau Hospital in which she, as an Aspirus employee, was the clinical



instructor for a group of 8 additional Marshfield Site students who completed their clinical rotations in hospital, clinic, and elementary school settings throughout the Wausau area. This was a rather unique opportunity in which she experienced nearly the entire curriculum with a single group of students. She later became our first Marshfield Site Clinical Learning Center Coordinator, a position that entailed tremendous responsibility in creating and organizing simulation and skills laboratory opportunities at the Marshfield Site, including when the Clinical Learning Center moved in 2021 from the Marshfield Medical Center to the UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield campus.

In addition to the teaching and simulation work, Ms. Zietlow was tremendously active in supporting the students and faculty and staff of the College, having served as the faculty advisor for the Eau Claire Student Nurses Association in Marshfield and as an academic advisor for nursing students, in addition to being on numerous committees, among other activities. She was recognized by the College with the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty & Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction in 2021. Besides her time with UWEC, Ms. Zietlow worked for many years in clinical practice as an ER and ICU nurse and as a nursing supervisor, as well as a Service and Health Associate Dean at a technical college, among other roles. She also served on many professional organization boards and committees, including as president and chair.

A highlight of Ms. Zietlow's career, however, has been being a part of her daughter's and granddaughter's nursing education, as both of them graduated from our nursing program at the Marshfield Site:

"Following in my grandmother's footsteps, then having my daughter and granddaughter following in my footsteps is such a blessing!" (See photo of granddaughter Katherine Griesbach, Ms. Zietlow, and daughter Stacie Jacobs.) With retirement, she is looking forward to celebrating her granddaughter's wedding, spending time with her other grandchildren, working in her vegetable and flower gardens, and traveling with her husband. They are hoping to visit the grave of her great-grandparents, as her great-grandfather had died in 1919 as a result of the Spanish Flu pandemic. We wish her and her family much health, happiness, and joy in retirement!

Ms. Allison Hannah, Dean's Executive Assistant, accepted a position in May 2023 as the Operations Advisor at the



University of Delaware, her alma mater. The move enables her to be closer to her family. Ms. Hannah started with the College as the Dean's Assistant in August 2020. Congratulations are extended to her on her new position.

Dr. Charlotte Sortedahl, Professor, stepped down from the Nursing Department



Chair role in June, after serving for well over three years in the position. She is returning to teaching full-time in the Department of Nursing. Dr. Sortedahl originally became a faculty member in our College in 2010 and assumed the Nursing Department Chair duties in January 2020, just prior to the start of the pandemic. We are grateful for the tremendous service she has provided to our College

during some particularly challenging years that included course and clinical transitions to virtual environments during the pandemic and then back again to the classrooms, labs, and practicum sites; clinical setting COVID-19 vaccination, testing, and mask requirements; increased admitted undergraduate student enrollments; and faculty shortages. We greatly appreciate that Dr. Sortedahl will continue to teach with us.

Ms. Kari Vanden Busch transitioned from her role as the Academic Department Associate at the Marshfield Site to become the Clinical Requirements Specialist in May 2023. Ms. Vanden Busch had originally started at the Marshfield Site in November 2018. The Clinical Requirements Specialist is a new position designed to help accommodate the in-



creased workload that has been occurring over the years in reviewing the immunization statuses and other clinical requirements (e.g., background

checks, TB testing, certifications, etc.) of students as the Clinical Agency Coordinator works to find clinical placements.

Dr. Marie Walsh, Assistant Professor, is the new Marshfield Site Clinical Learning



Center Coordinator, following the retirement of Dr. Vickkie Zietlow in May 2023. Dr. Walsh started teaching with us at the Marshfield Site in January 2020 and previously had taught nursing students at Rasmussen College in Wausau, Wisconsin and at Chamberlain College in Minneapolis.

Remembrances

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of people we lost from the College this past academic year.

Mr. Robert (Bob) Lieske, Media Specialist Emeritus, passed away on February 25, 2023 at the age of 76. He had been residing in Kasson, Minnesota. Mr. Lieske originally



was from Sheboygan, Wisconsin and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Master of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He started his career as a school-teacher and coach in the eastern

part of Wisconsin and later was a media specialist at UW-Eau Claire, retiring in September 2010 after 27 years of service to our College. He had a passion for music, both as a writer and as a performer, and for sailing and people.

Mr. Lieske was an ever-present fixture in our Nursing Learning Resource Center (LRC) where he helped students, faculty, and staff with various learning needs. He also was our photographer and supplied many of the images gracing our newsletters over the years. He loved the students and often hosted cookout picnics at his home in Eau Claire for students, faculty, and staff back when students at the Marshfield Site were required to complete some of their initial nursing courses in the summer at the Eau Claire campus. In 2009, in recognition of his efforts to welcome and support students and faculty and staff, he received the Ihle Family Award for Caring from the College. Bob is missed by many people. His wife, Ms.

Victoria (Vicki) Lieske was a clinical instructor and pre-nursing student adviser with us for many years. Our thoughts are with his family and many friends.

Ms. Isabel Rose Davis was a student in our traditional undergraduate nursing program in Eau Claire. Shortly before the start of the spring and final semester of her program she was diagnosed with metastatic ovarian cancer and was unable to enroll in classes as she underwent intensive treatments. She passed away on May 4, 2023, at the age of 21. A few days

prior to her passing, Dean Kristen Abbott-Anderson visited Ms. Davis at her home in Elk River, Minnesota and pinned her with the UW-Eau Claire nursing pin and presented her with her diploma, signifying the awarding of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. A Nightingale Tribute was performed in her honor at the Nursing Convocation (pinning)

ceremony held on May 20, 2023 for her graduating cohort of peers. Ms. Davis is fondly remembered by peers and faculty who acknowledge she would have been an exceptional, caring nurse.



Her family has started a nursing scholarship in her name at UW-Eau Claire. Donations may be made to the Isabel Rose Davis Nursing Scholarship via the UW-Eau Claire Foundation (<https://foundation.uwec.edu/>) using the following direct link: <https://connect.uwec.edu/donate?fid=He7sQSwHjZo%3D&fdesc=8t3pPiLCI2d5B2BNG%3D&fpgna2CKGdsHMllAmXCa7Bi6ccqumOyzpbbg%3D%3D>.

Checks also can be sent to UW-Eau Claire Foundation, P.O. Box 1208, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1208, with "Isabel Rose Davis Nursing Scholarship" indicated in the check memo line.

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!*

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 staff members were honored with awards from the College in a College meeting held on August 24, 2022 at the start of the 2022-2023 academic year (see large group photo of the College). **Dr. Rachel Merkel** received the Ihle Family Award for Caring; **Dr.**

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 two research projects, *PrevenTEEN ENDS Use and NicoTEEN Addiction Through Adult Role Model Education* and *Correctional Nurses: Moving from Moral Distress to Moral Resilience*.

A decision was made to change the timeline from August to late spring for the administration of the preceding awards for the future. Therefore, the above recog-

to Associate Professor and tenured.

Dr. Theresa Dachel, Assistant Professor, received a UW-Eau Claire Foundation Gritzmacher Science Education Fellowship for 2022-2023.

Dr. Jeanette Olsen (see photo), Associate Professor and Director of Assessment and Evaluation, received the inaugural Suzanne Strowig University Faculty Award in Nursing in February 2023. As part of a Sustaining Human Innovation Campaign, the UW-Eau Claire Founda-



Lorraine Smith the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness; **Dr. Benjamin Bogle** the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction; **Ms. Catherine Wildenberg** the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award; **Dr. Theresa Dachel** the Sue Peck Holism and Integrative Therapies Award; **Ms. Mary Pomietlo** the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award; and **Ms. Kari Vanden Busch** the Dean's Award for Administrative Professional Excellence.

Additional awardees from the College were recognized at the August meeting. **Ms. Catherine Wildenberg**, Prelicensure Academic Success Coordinator, 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 in the process of pursuing a PhD at Villanova University, M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing.

ditions were also announced by Dean Abbott-Anderson at the May 10, 2023 College meeting. **Ms. Pajyeeb Lo**, a recent BSN alum, received the Ihle Family Award for Caring; **Dr. Dalete Mota** the Suzanne Van Ort Award for Faculty Creativity and Scholarliness; **Dr. Meg Lagunas** the Patricia M. Ostmo Award for Faculty and Academic Staff Excellence in Clinical Instruction; **Dr. Gunnar Larson** the Rita Kisting Sparks Faculty Service Award; **Ms. Stacey Stafne** the Sue Peck Holism and Integrative Therapies Award; **Dr. Ben Bogle** the CeCelia Zorn Exemplary Teaching Award; **Mr. Andrew Hanson** the Dean's Award for Administrative Professional Excellence; **Dr. Dalete Mota** the Colleen and Tom Nevins College of Nursing Faculty Development and Scholarship Award; and **Dr. Theresa Dachel** the Mary C. and Fred Bliss Endowment for Nursing Faculty Professional Development Award.

A few promotions were announced in August 2022, including **Dr. Dalete Mota** to Professor and tenured, and **Dr. Ann Aschenbrenner** and **Dr. Meg Lagunas**

tion worked to create a University Fellows program which makes available, over a period of three to five years, either a stipend or course release to faculty. The Suzanne Strowig estate provided the funding for this nursing award, to span five years, which recognizes mid-career professors who have demonstrated a high level of professional excellence. Ms.

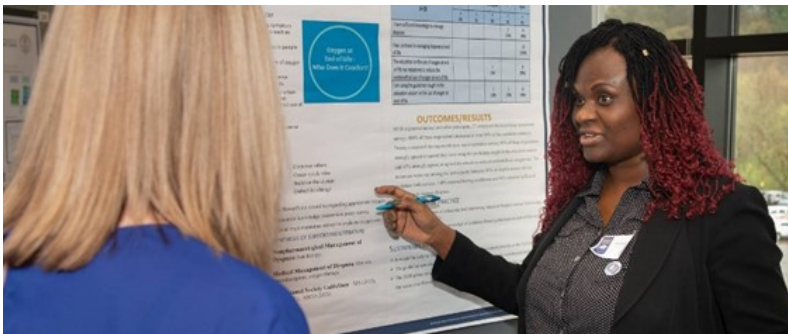


Honors, Recognitions, Awards, & News (Continued)

Strowig was a 1976 graduate of our traditional undergraduate nursing program and later earned a Master of Science degree in Nursing from the University of Texas at Arlington. She worked for more than 40 years as a clinical research nurse practitioner as part of a team at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center focused on improving the treatment of diabetes. Ms. Strowig passed away in 2021 at the age of 68.

Dr. Olsen is using the award to enhance her practice experience and scholarly skills in nursing informatics by pursuing a post-master's certificate in nursing informatics. To that end, this summer she attended the Vanderbilt Informatics Summer Training Academy which is providing helpful information in addressing the informatics competencies indicated in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) new *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* guidance. The nursing informatics expertise will be an asset to our nursing programs.

Dr. Jeanette Olsen also received another well-deserved accolade this May 2023. She was presented with an Excellence in Mentoring in Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Award by the University at an Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) ceremony held at Davies Center. The award of \$1500 is given to recognize a faculty member who has been at UW-Eau Claire for five or more years and has been an outstanding research mentor to undergraduate stu-



dents. Dr. Olsen started at UW-Eau Claire in 2017 and has graced the pages of this newsletter in the past, having received the University Excellence Award in Teaching in 2021.

Ms. Kirsten Dieckman, Clinical Assistant Professor, and **Dr. Dalete Mota**, Professor, were awarded a \$126,505.90 grant from the Mayo Research and Innovation Council in July 2023 for their study, *Melatonin Concentration During Lactation, Maternal Determinants and Repercussions*. They are excited to start the project in September. Ms. Dieckman and Dr. Mota are co-principal investigators, along with Dr. Ganesh Namachivayam and Dr. Karen K. Myhre at Mayo Clinic Health System. They also will be working with a nursing research team in Brazil.

The **Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma** held its annual Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship Day in Davies Center on May 5, 2023. Undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty and staff and members of the community presented their scholarship work. **Dr. Rita Kisting Sparks**, Associate Dean Emerita, provided *A Kaleidoscopic Trip to the Past* in which she recalled the formation of the Delta Phi Chapter and its history over

the years. Dr. Kisting Sparks' talk was followed by a Keynote address by **Dr. Sonja Meiers**, the Jane W. and James E. Moore Nursing Research Professor, enti-

led, *What does a Nurse Researcher Do? Answering the Question through Family Nursing Science*.

For the first time, the UW-Eau Claire Graduate Studies Office held a Graduate Studies Research Day event in conjunction with the Kaleidoscope of Nursing Scholarship Day in Davies Center. We joined forces to enable the Nursing graduate students to present posters of their MSN or DNP projects simultaneously for both events. (See photo of Dr. Irene Ekobena presenting her DNP Project; photo by S. Opatz.)

Dr. Sharon Tucker (see photo), a 1991 alum of our Master of Science in Nursing program, co-authored the second edition of *Evidence-Based Practice in Action*, which received a 2022 American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award, second place, in the Nursing Research category. Dr. Tucker is the Grayce Sills Endowed Professor in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing, the Associate Dean for Health Promotion and Well-being, the Director of the DNP Nurse Executive Track, and the Director of the Translational/Implementation Research Core, Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for EBP at The Ohio State University College of Nursing.



We extend our congratulations to all on their accomplishments.

Welcomes

Although we were saddened to say goodbye to several faculty and staff members this past year, we also were excited to be joined by several new members of our College, including a new dean!

Dean Kristen Abbott-Anderson (see photo) began her position as Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences on January 3rd, 2023, following a national

search. Dean Abbott-Anderson most recently had been the Director of the Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society at Minnesota State University Mankato School of Nursing. She originally earned her Master of Science (MS) degree in 2009 and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Nursing in 2015 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing. Her Bachelor of Science degree

in Human Development is from Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon and her nursing diploma is from Good Samaritan School of Nursing also in Portland. Her academic experience includes teaching at Minnesota State University Mankato from 2014-2022 and earning the Certified Nurse Educator (CNE) credential. Dean Abbott-Anderson has published in numerous journals, including

Welcomes (Continued)

Creative Nursing, the Journal of Women & Aging, the Journal of Professional Nursing, and Gynecologic Oncology, among others. Her research focus pertains to Alzheimer's



disease and related dementias, end of life care, and women's health across the lifespan. She has been serving on the

International Family Nursing Society Board of Directors.

Dean Abbott-Anderson has considerable clinical practice experience, including staff nurse, home health nurse, utilization review RN, childbirth instructor, case manager, charge nurse, and visiting nurse positions. Her combined practice, teaching, and research experience and passion for nursing are serving her well as our new

dean. We look forward to her continued leadership.

We also welcomed several other individuals to our College in the 2022-2023 academic year. In August 2022, we were joined by **Ms. Jackie Fitzgerald**, Clinical Instructor, at our Marshfield Site. For Spring 2023, we welcomed three new clinical track instructors to our Eau Claire campus, including **Ms. Nancy Ferrara-France**, Clinical Assistant Professor; **Ms. Sarah Scovil**, Clinical Instructor; and **Ms. Stephanie Foulk**, Clinical Instructor. **Ms. Christina Hoyt**, Clinical Instructor, joined us at our Marshfield Site.

Ms. Morgan Stelter started in August 2022 as our Simulation Technician for the Clinical Learning Center in Eau Claire. This was a needed new position in light of the increased use of simulation in our undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. The Simulation Technician position has been particularly helpful in managing the higher enrollments in our traditional undergraduate nursing program in Eau Claire, as part of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Grant funding. Ms. Stelter graduated in May 2022 from UW-Eau Claire with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mi-

crobiology and a minor in Management. She also is an EMT-B and has worked as an emergency department technician and a telemetry technician.

Dr. Beth Evans, Assistant Professor, was hired into a Public/Population Health tenure-track nursing faculty position that began in Spring 2023. She earned a Master of Nursing Science, Gerontology and a PhD in Nursing from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She is certified as a Gerontological Nurse Practitioner. Dr. Evans has prior geriatric specialist experience in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and advanced practice nurse experience in Little Rock and North Little Rock, Arkansas. She also has been a clinical educator and instructor.

Dr. Melissa (Mel) Skoff, an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner, joined us as an Assistant Professor starting with the Spring 2023 semester. She earned her DNP degree, Family Nurse Practitioner track and an Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Graduate Certificate from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, where she also was an Assistant Professor. Dr. Skoff continues to maintain her clinical expertise as a nurse practitioner at Spooner Health in Spooner.

Student Organizations in Eau Claire and Marshfield—Helping Communities

We are proud of the work our student organizations do to support our communities and their peers, both in Eau Claire and in Marshfield.

The Eau Claire campus has chapters of the Eau Claire Student Nurses' Association (ECSNA), the Optimist Club, and the American Association for Men in Nursing.



Dr. Gail Hanson Brenner serves as the faculty adviser for ECSNA, Dr. Josephine Arriola advises the Optimist Club, and Dr. Gunnar Larson advises the Men in Nursing chapter.

The ECSNA in Eau Claire was particularly active this past academic year as they hosted guest speakers and held stethoscope and apparel sales, in addition to organizing and running the Nursing and Health Care Professional Career Fair and participating in the Bugold Organizations Bash (see photo 1) and Nurses



Day at the Capitol. Besides these events, ECSNA members volunteered to organize, assist with, or participate in numerous other activities, including making Valentine's Day cards for individuals residing at

Student Organizations in Eau Claire and Marshfield—Helping Communities (continued)



3

ECNSA events and activities, collected for the Toys for Tots drive and a Band-Aid drive, made 175 period packs, participated in a Highway Cleanup, and created cards for individuals residing in local nursing homes, both in November and in February for Valentine's Day (see photo 4), among other activities.

The student organization members in Marshfield also held a food drive for and participated in the Rotary Winter Wonderland lights display to ben-

efit food pantries in the Marshfield area (see photo 5) and volunteered at a high school career expo event to recruit students to the nursing program (see photo 6, with Student Organization Adviser Ms. Vickie Zietlow standing on the far right and Marshfield Site Director Dr. Rachel Merkel seated on the far right).

an area nursing home; volunteering with the Walk to End Alzheimer's (see photo 2); and assembling materials for the Purple Tube Project (see photo 3), which provides people with dementia and their caregivers a purple-colored tube filled with emergency information to help first responders.



4



5

We are thankful for the efforts of our student organization leaders and members in serving and contributing to our communities in such positive, generous, and meaningful ways.

Members of ECSNA in Eau Claire also joined forces with the Men in Nursing Chapter and the Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma to make tie blankets for families at the Rosebud Indian Reservation; plus, the three organizations assisted with greeting and welcoming students at ice cream socials offered by the College in Fall. Additionally, ECSNA members supported pre-nursing and newly admitted students through their peer mentorship program.

At our distance education site in Marshfield, we have chapters of 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 Andres advising NCF. The Optimist Club merged with ECSNA in Fall 2022 in Marshfield.

Like the Eau Claire chapter, ECSNA was particularly active in Marshfield as they hosted guest speakers and sold apparel, but also held Popcorn Thursday fundraisers to support



6

