

# College of Nursing



*Our BSN program soars into the*

# TOP 25

**of all programs in the U.S.!**

## ***#1 in Arizona!***

**In this edition:**

- ▶ Nurses Fighting COVID: Wildcats make an impact across Arizona.
- ▶ Nursing student appointed to State of Arizona Committee.
- ▶ Dr. Terry Badger receives lifetime achievement award.
- ▶ New Strategic plan puts special focus on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.





THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

## College of Nursing

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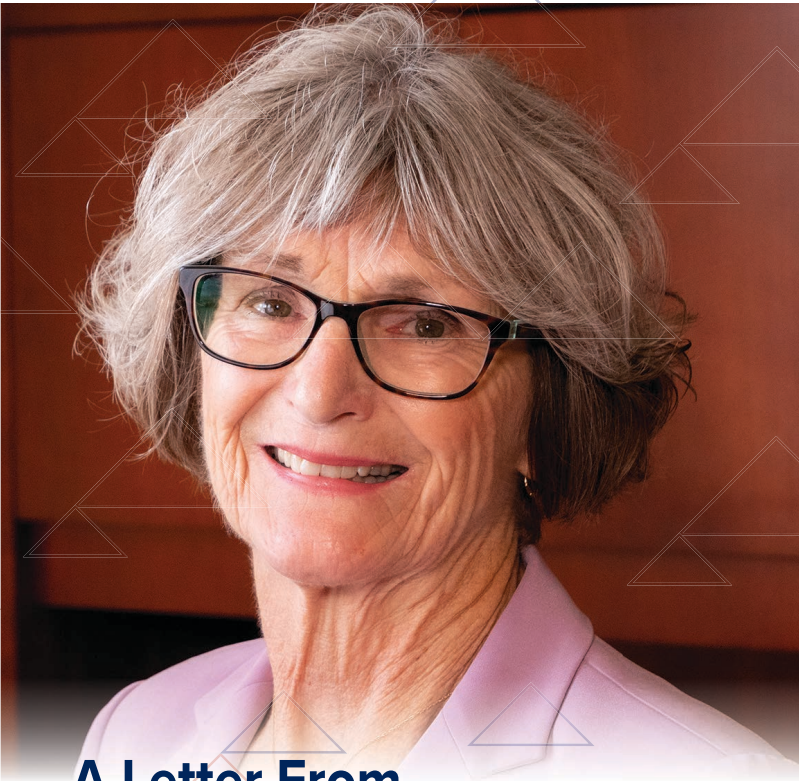
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UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF NURSING

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## A Letter From

# Dean Moore

Dear Wildcat Nursing Community,

The College of Nursing's resilience and commitment to excellence, despite the challenges of COVID-19, are reflected in the wide range of achievements across the research/scholarship, teaching, and service missions. I am excited to share a number of these achievements with you in this year-end magazine.

We received four Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) training grants that provide vital support for academic programs and students. Drs. Sara Edmund and Lindsay Bouchard were awarded funding for the continuation of their *Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program for Professionals*. This interdisciplinary training grant with the UArizona College of Medicine Department of Psychiatry serves as an education and training platform for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners and PhD-level psychologists who are committed to delivering care in underserved and culturally-diverse areas. Dr. Timian Godfrey along with Co-investigators Dr. Cheri Lacasse, Dr. Jessica Rainbow, and Ms. Linda Perez were funded for the *Arizona Nursing Career Apex Transitions (ANCAT) Project* which will increase the number of students from backgrounds underrepresented in Nursing who are admitted to,

retained in, and graduated from the College of Nursing. Drs. Cheri Lacasse and Linda Phillips HRSA grant will increase nursing opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and strengthen the eldercare nursing workforce in Arizona's rural communities that experience high health care disparities related to access and delivery of care. Finally, the HRSA continuation award to Drs. Debra Williams, Lisa Kiser, and Lindsay Bouchard provides resources to increase the number of qualified sexual assault nurse examiners and expand access to sexual assault forensic examinations that will lead to improved physical and mental health care for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence and higher prosecution rates.

Simulation is increasingly important for preparing students to be "practice ready" graduates from entry-to practice or advanced practice programs. Dr. Janine Hinton, Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Simulation, was selected as a Center for University Education Scholarship Fellow to create "*Simulated Clinical Time Travel and Augmented Intelligence to Prevent and Manage Patient Deterioration*". Her project addresses the clinically significant and serious problem of failure to rescue among seriously ill patients.

In the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, several College of Nursing faculty answered a call to develop a rapid response team of nurses to assist Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) with COVID-19 relief efforts and provide care to individuals on the Navajo Nation. With financial support from the Central Arizona Area Health Education Center, a team of faculty led by Drs. Lisa Kiser, Timian Godfrey, Tarnia Newton, and David Trinidad designed a service-learning immersion experience for Doctor of Nursing Practice students. The team traveled to a critical access hospital operated by the Indian Health Service, where students gathered comprehensive or focused health histories, performed physical examinations, and developed a problem list for acute and chronic COVID-related health conditions. The experience was "career changing" for students and faculty. As one student reflected "there is no better way to learn about another culture than being immersed in it". We are grateful to our community partners and the team at GIMC for providing our faculty and students an invaluable opportunity to learn.

Our students continue to push the boundaries of scholarship and practice. Dr. Carrie Langley, a recent PhD graduate entered the DNP program to focus on individuals who experience mental illness during the transition from jail to a rural community. As a former Robert Wood Johnson scholar and recent Jonas Scholar awardee, Carrie wants to "bridge the gap in care between probation departments and health care providers". PhD graduate, Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Oblea has distinguished himself as one of the military's star nurse scientists. As Chief, Center for Nursing Science and Clinical Inquiry at Tripler Army Medical Center, Dr. Oblea's primary responsibility is to provide oversight and facilitation for nursing research and evidence-based practice projects. He credits the mentorship and guidance he received during his doctoral program from Dr. Terry Badger as the inspiration for his leadership role.

I hope you enjoy the stories in this year-end magazine that capture the College's resilience and commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ki Moore", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ki Moore, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Dean, The College of Nursing



# UArizona Nursing Soars

*in First-Ever  
U.S. News &  
World Report  
Best Bachelor  
of Science in  
Nursing Rankings*

By Jason Gelt







### ▶ ▶ ▶ Students in the BSN program at our Tucson Campus.

As part of its **2022 Best Colleges** list released on September 13, **U.S. News & World Report** revealed its rankings for Best Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs – a first in the history of the rankings. Out of 694 schools, the University of Arizona College of Nursing's BSN program ranked number 23 on the latest report overall, 16th amongst public universities and number one amongst Arizona's BSN nursing programs.

The strong ranking is only UArizona Nursing's latest success with U.S. News & World Report. Earlier this year the College's online Master of Science in Nursing in Clinical Systems Leadership was ranked No. 31 in the organization's Best Online Master's in Nursing Programs rankings (39th overall), and UArizona Nursing's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program was ranked 33. The latest ranking for UArizona Nursing's undergraduate program solidifies the College's standing as a superior school for a variety of academic disciplines.

"It is gratifying to see the hard work of faculty and students recognized by the College's recent US News

& World Report rankings," said UArizona Nursing Dean Ki Moore, PhD, RN, FAAN. "Our Tucson-based BSN program is the first academic program offered by the College of Nursing and garners a long-standing record of excellence. The BSN-Integrative Health program is located at the Gilbert campus with doors opening in 2019. I am so proud that nursing leaders across the U.S. recognized the exceptional quality of these 2 programs and the faculty who are dedicated to preparing the next generation of 'practice-ready' graduates."

"It is wonderful to get this recognition for our BSN program – both our conventional BSN pathway in Tucson and our newest, and first-of-its kind, integrative health pathway in Gilbert, Arizona," said Connie Miller, DNP, RNC-OB, CNE, Chair General Nursing and Education Division. "Adding this new pathway allows us to admit an additional 216 students per year to accommodate our ever-growing number of pre-nursing students and help address the nursing shortage in Arizona. Nursing is a rewarding career, but the pandemic has added



**“It is wonderful to get this recognition for our BSN program – both our conventional BSN pathway in Tucson and our newest, and first-of-its kind, integrative health pathway in Gilbert, Arizona,”**

**~ Connie Miller, DNP, RNC-OB, CNE,  
Chair General Nursing and Education Division**

many new challenges for nurses and requiring enormous strength and resilience. We are proud of our programs that offer outstanding instruction, learning resources, clinical experiences, simulations, as well as student-centered faculty and staff to support student success while in the program and best prepare them to enter the workforce resilient and ready to care for individuals, families, and communities through caring/healing relationships.”

U.S. News & World Report’s BSN nursing program rankings arrive as enrollment in nursing programs has been steadily increasing, and amid widespread concern about COVID-19 fueled nursing staff shortages. Rankings are determined by the average of scores received from surveys of top academics and administrators at nursing schools or departments. Schools are included and ranked in the standalone peer assessment survey if they have bachelor’s-level accreditation by either the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. Additionally, these regionally accredited institutions must have recently awarded at least 35 BSN degrees.

The surveys for the new rankings were conducted in the spring and summer of 2021. Deans and faculty members were tasked with rating academic quality of peer institutions’ BSN programs on the following scale: outstanding (5), strong (4), good (3), adequate (2) or marginal (1).

UArizona Nursing’s nationally renowned and highly ranked BSN degree program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. It is also approved by the Arizona State Board of Nursing and is affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Western Institute of Nursing. Students graduate prepared for a diverse range of jobs, from bedside nurses in medical settings, nurse educators, health policy nurses, nurse recruiters, nurse informaticists, forensic nurses, clinical research nurses, or nurse health coaches.

UArizona Nursing offers two distinct BSN pathways, a conventional pathway located on the Health Sciences Campus in Tucson, Ariz., and an integrative health pathway located in Gilbert, Ariz. Both programs utilize advanced technology and cutting-edge didactic curriculum to prepare students for the working world.

# Wildcat Nurses Confront COVID-19

By Jason Gelt





Banner  
Health

GET THE  
COVID-19  
VACCINE

During a tumultuous and unpredictable year, Wildcat Nurses summoned up their reserves despite the challenges and confronted the trials and tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic in heroic ways, both big and small. These stories could fill a magazine, but here are three of our most noteworthy news items that illustrate the commitment of our faculty and students during a difficult time.

### ***Nurse Burnout: The Next COVID-19 Crisis?***

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic started its devastating roll across the country, the health care work environment was experiencing challenges – especially for nurses. According to UArizona Nursing Assistant Professor Jessica Rainbow, PhD, RN, and UArizona Nursing PhD candidate Chloe Littzen, MSN, RN, AE-C, PhD Candidate, the pandemic has only intensified a problem that many people outside the healthcare industry aren't even aware of... nurse burnout.

Prior to the pandemic, nurses who experienced burnout were leaving the workforce at an exponential rate. Coinciding with this, nurses were placed at a higher risk for the negative consequences of suicide and poor mental and physical health issues. This exodus has put added pressure on the already existing nurse shortage, which in turn has already negatively impacted quality of patient care. A lack of enough nurses in the workforce has forced nurses to work more shifts and longer hours, further placing them at risk for experiencing burnout and suboptimal well-being.

Adding fuel to this fire, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues. “Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the suffering of nurses from suboptimal well-being and burnout was normalized in healthcare,” adds Littzen. “According to Arundhati Roy, COVID-19 is a portal, and we have the choice to decide what we leave behind. Now is the time we acknowledge that the normalization of suffering in nurses is unacceptable, and together we need to create work environments that enable all nurses to thrive in the new post-pandemic world.”

Dr. Rainbow and Littzen are both conducting IRB-approved research studies that will describe the experiences of our frontline nurses prior to, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Rainbow's study is utilizing a voicemail box to collect recordings of the experiences of nurses and others working in healthcare during the pandemic. Anyone working in a healthcare setting in the United States during the pandemic is eligible to call the study voicemail box (1-833-624-0707) and leave a message detailing their experiences. Dr. Rainbow describes the inspiration for her study as, “Listening to nurses and other providers talk about working during COVID-19 made me interested in capturing recordings of these experiences to figure out how we can intervene to improve the healthcare work environment and also to catalogue this time in our history.” Participants can access the consent form with study information online or contact Dr. Rainbow for more information.

Dr. Rainbow and Littzen hope to expand on the understanding of





## ▶▶▶ UArizona Nursing Leads Students on COVID-19 Relief Project in Gallup, New Mexico

the impact of COVID-19 on nurses from their two ongoing studies. The participation of more nurses in this research will help improve readiness for future pandemics and build interventions to improve the healthcare work environment.

### ***All Hands on Deck: the College of Nursing's Role in Campus Vaccine Roll-Out***

As the University of Arizona rolled out its intensive vaccination plan in January, the College of Nursing played an essential role in the implementation at the Point of Dispensing (POD) operations. When the University's Incident Command System (ICS) team requested help, UArizona Nursing faculty, staff, and students answered the call.

DNP program Director Allen Prettyman, PhD, and Senior Manager, Operations Isabel Chavez, MEd, played pivotal roles in recruiting people to help vaccinate and support POD operations. Additionally, Chair, General Nursing and Health Education Division Connie Miller, DNP, was involved in recruiting faculty to aid in the effort, as well as giving vaccines at Tucson Medical Center.

Aiding the effort in Maricopa County was a crew of Level 2 Bachelor of Science in Nursing Integrative Health (BSN-IH) specialty students under the supervision of Clinical Instructors Tara Loghry, MSN, RNC-OB, C-EFM, and Jules Leverenz, MSN, ACNP. The students administered Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at the Banner vaccine clinic at Maricopa County

Fairgrounds. “It’s been fantastic to see their confidence grow as they have become more comfortable with injections,” said Leverenz, who estimates that students administered between 10 and 30 injections on the day of their rotations.

Essential to the effort was Lecturer Sherry Daniels, MS, MPH, RN, who was called in by the Incident Commander for the Campus Health task force to help with the management of the POD ops for COVID vaccine on Campus. Thanks to her previous role as Pima County Health Department (PCHD) director, she still had contact with many of the department’s staff and leadership. “Since I still have connections with the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, they reached out due to my leadership past and my experience with running large scale immunization events with Pima County: Measles in 2008 and H1N1 in 2009,” she said.

Although the registration process was initially beset by unpredictability, the process eventually smoothed out. Also of great importance was logistics aid provided by UArizona Facilities Management and vaccination help from colleagues like Lecturer Kathleen Malkin, who has years of experience planning, implementing, and evaluating large vaccination clinics while working with the Pima County Health Dept. “I know the amount of planning, effort and resources needed to operationalize a mass clinic,” Malkin said. “The University has done a great job with this. I have found that the organizers are receptive to feedback on the ways to improve the clinic and each week, things just get better and better. The people coming for their vaccines remark how organized things are and how smoothly things go.”



▶ ▶ ▶ All Hands on Deck: the UArizona College of Nursing’s Pivotal Role in Campus Vaccine Roll-Out

## ***UArizona Nursing Leads Students on COVID-19 Relief Project in Gallup, New Mexico***

In February, 2021, UArizona Nursing professors Timian Godfrey, DNP, and Lisa Kiser, DNP, took a team of six students to Gallup, New Mexico for a clinical immersion experience at a critical access hospital operated by the Indian Health Service. Titled the Gallup Indian Medical Center COVID-19 Relief Project, the unique service-learning immersion experience was in direct response to a request for assistance from the Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC).

University of New Mexico Director of Community Environmental Health Program, Johnnye Lewis started the ball rolling when she wrote that GIMC was in desperate need of nurses. “Infection rate on the Navajo Nation has been steadily increasing despite reductions in the state of NM rate recently, and as always, they are woefully understaffed,” she wrote.

Drs. Godfrey and Kiser answered the call, quickly developing and piloting the service-learning immersion program.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I’ve felt helpless as I witnessed devastation occur throughout our nation and disproportionately affect my people on the Navajo Nation,” Dr. Godfrey said. “When I received notice that GIMC needed help with COVID-19 relief efforts and was asking for nurses specifically, every part of who I am as a nurse and a Navajo woman wanted to help the frontline workers who had been working non-stop for almost a year. Since I didn’t have experience in organizing an immersion experience

like this, I reached out immediately to some incredible faculty members to see how, and if, this could be operationalized.”

Learning objectives for the project were geared around encouraging leadership and engagement as the students supported COVID-19 vaccination efforts at GIMC. Students practiced gathering a comprehensive or focused history, performed physical examinations, and developed a problem list for acute and chronic stable health conditions related to COVID-19.

Additionally, they developed a comprehensive plan for health maintenance through immersive and tailored understanding of the health issues and concerns during the COVID 19 pandemic for indigenous communities throughout the southwest.

The service learning project is unique because, as Dr. Godfrey points out, it provides a chance to learn and grow both to the service providers and those they are serving. “If anything, I’ve learned more from the community partners on service learning immersions rather than me serving them,” Dr. Godfrey says.

The Clinical Immersion Experience was a success by many measures. GIMC received much-needed people power in managing response endeavors and students developed essential cultural competencies that led them to incorporate theories and methods that affect practice in underserved populations. Both GIMC and Drs. Godfrey and Kiser are excited to continue the collaboration and funding is in place for more immersions at GIMC.

*UArizona Nursing*  
*Alumnus Lieutenant*  
*Colonel Pedro Oblea,*

# **Aims to Make Masks More Comfortable**

*for HealthCare  
Workers*

By Jason Gelt





▶ ▶ ▶ UArizona Nursing Alumnus Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Oblea

Since completing his PhD at the University of Arizona College of Nursing in 2014, Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Oblea, PhD, RN has distinguished himself as one of the military's star nurse scientists. Frequently on the move in pursuit of new knowledge and experience, his duties have taken him to locales as diverse as, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany; and Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In October, 2020, he was promoted to the position as Chief, Center for Nursing Science and Clinical Inquiry, Tripler Army Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii.

An active-duty military officer for nearly 18 years, Dr. Oblea was deployed to Iraq twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as an ICU Nurse and

as a Brigade Nurse. His research has focused on the effects of short-term separation on the behavioral health of military wives and a groundbreaking investigation into the experiences and challenges impacting the health and readiness of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) military service members. Currently, Dr. Oblea is embarking on a new study, under review by the Military Institutional Review Board – funded by a \$158,000 grant from the TriService Nursing Research Program (TSNRP) – to study N95-respirators.

His interest in the project dates to his time at Fort Bragg, when an officer in charge of a deployed unit told him that military nurses were experiencing facial skin breakdown caused by the constant mask requirements. “As a nurse scientist, I was intrigued,” he said. Looking for evidence or gaps in knowledge, he reviewed the literature for possible treatments and clinical practice guidelines to prevent skin breakdown related to wearing N95 respirators. “To my surprise, very few research articles have been published on this topic,” he said. “Epidemiological studies have revealed that healthcare workers who wear N95 masks suffer from acne, facial dermatitis, and pigmentation of the nasal bridge, cheeks, and chin. I decided to write a research grant for possible funding.”

The study – which is scheduled to last until February, 2022 – will employ a non-blinded, randomized, three-period crossover design with two active treatments (faceplate and cream) and a control group. Each study participant will serve as their own control for comparison with the received interventions, eliminating the influence of selection bias. Participants will use the hydrocolloid skin protectant under their N95 masks, a dimethicone cream application, or no hydrocolloid barrier based on the randomization.

“I expect the hydrocolloid skin protectant, which is strong yet thin enough to allow a good seal when donning a N95 respirator, will reduce skin breakdown in the facial area and improve PPE protocol adherence,” Dr. Oblea said, noting that it is still too early to do more than speculate about possible results.

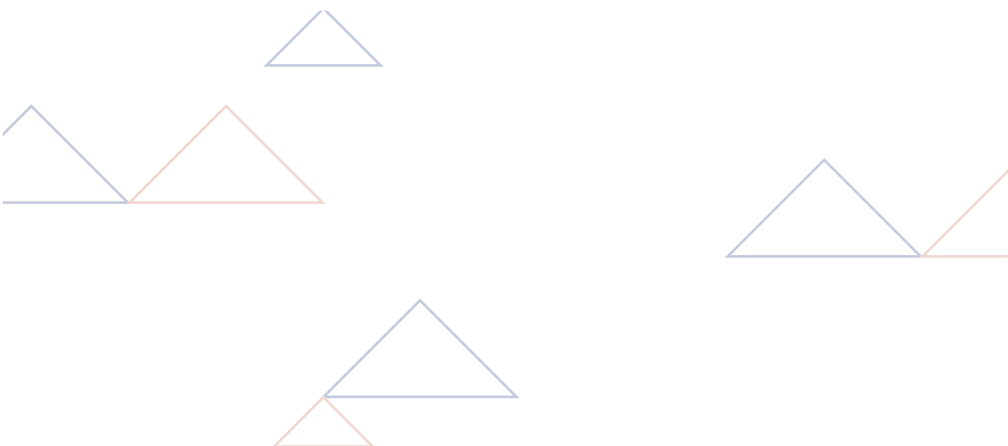
In his new position as Chief, Center for Nursing Science and Clinical Inquiry at Tripler Army Medical Center, Dr. Oblea has a host of important responsibilities. The Center has one of the largest military hospitals in the Pacific and falls within Regional Health Command – Pacific, which oversees medical, dental, and public health facilities on the West Coast of the United States as well as in Alaska, Hawaii, Japan, and South Korea. Its operational space spans 36 countries and encompasses more than 4,500 miles across five time zones. Dr. Oblea’s primary responsibility is to provide oversight and facilitation for nursing research and evidence-based practice projects. “I supervise a staff of nurse scientists, doctorally prepared clinical nurse specialists, and research coordinators,” he said, adding that he oversees and engages in research and evidence-based practice execution, mentorship, and education. “I also provide consultations and decision support. Ultimately, I encourage and establish collaborations with military and civilian university students and staff while also participating in organizational development initiatives.”

**“***When I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, my focus changed from ‘self-serving’ to ‘service to others,’ meaning that I no longer put my own career first, but instead focused on how to help others achieve their goals, accomplish their mission, and perform better in their jobs.***”**

*~ Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Oblea*

Dr. Oblea cites the mentorship and guidance he received as a PhD student at UArizona Nursing as providing inspiration for his leadership role. “I still ask my faculty advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Terry A. Badger, for advice when I need to make decisions and fine-tune research questions,” he said. “The process of earning a PhD is all about learning how to become a scientist, but the University of Arizona offers elective courses that prepare doctoral students for a career in leadership and management.”

Dr. Oblea’s magnanimous view of his responsibilities are inspiring and embody the qualities that distinguish so many of our Wildcat Nurses. “When I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, my focus changed from ‘self-serving’ to ‘service to others,’ meaning that I no longer put my own career first, but instead focused on how to help others achieve their goals, accomplish their mission, and perform better in their jobs,” he said. “I believe that, when my soldiers excel in their jobs and succeed in their missions, it will reflect my leadership and management style in the long run.”





# Wildcat Nurse Carrie Langley:

*A Passion for **Practice and People**  
Points Toward a Bright Future*

By Jason Gelt




2021 has been a busy year for University of Arizona College of Nursing Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student Carrie Langley, PhD, MPH, RN-BC. Not only did she finish her PhD program and begin the DNP program a scant week later, but as the past Director of Health and Social Services for Cochise County she helped lead the county's efforts against COVID-19; adding to her track record of academic inquiry and public service, the Robert Wood Johnson scholar and Jonas Philanthropies awardee was recently appointed as a public member to the State of Arizona Committee on Probation (COP) for a two-year term. A subcommittee of the Arizona Judicial Branch, the COP examines current probation procedures with an eye toward improving quality and consistency of probation procedures statewide.

"There's a gap between probation departments and the health care professionals," Dr. Langley, who also holds a Master's in Public health, says. "Coming from a perspective of public health, and as a nurse scientist, I hope to inform policy and procedure by sharing either what I learned in my research or what additional research I'm doing to really try to bridge that gap. I'd like to try to help them understand what mental health issues probationers are going through when they transition from jail to probation."

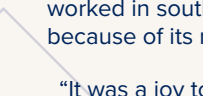
Dr. Langley's DNP project focuses on individuals who experience mental illness who are transitioning from jail to the rural community, making her an ideal person for her committee role. With a longstanding passion for improving access to mental health care in rural communities, Dr. Langley plans to develop an educational intervention to improve the support provided through the transition process. She will begin her process by reaching out to both probation officers and nurse practitioners and other health care providers to gauge their awareness of the other professions' knowledge.

"What do probation officers know about what happens in primary care or mental health?" Dr. Langley says. "And then what do our mental health nurse practitioners know about probation? I've seen both sides now in prior work. Coming from a nursing background, I'd like to build that collaboration. My goal is to create a training program to enlighten both sides about the various requirements of both so they can collaborate to better help their patient."

Dr. Langley's past position as Director of Health and Social Services for Cochise County prepared her for her current role. While serving as incident commander for the County's COVID response efforts in Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista and Wilcox, she also had the opportunity to learn about the justice system and the interworking of the jail services and how they do and don't connect with rural communities. "Being in that position opened my eyes to managed care organizations that operate our Medicaid programs, which most individuals who are experiencing these mental health issues are involved with," she says. "There's a lot of complexity in those health care plans. How people can access services, and what's paid for what isn't, can certainly be a barrier."

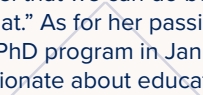


Born and raised in rural West Virginia, Dr. Langley knew she wanted to become a nurse when she was in high school. She began her career as an emergency room nurse in Fayetteville, NC. She later commissioned into the Army Nurse Corps where she served eight years in a variety of positions in clinical areas, and later, leadership roles. Since 2009, she has lived and worked in southeastern Arizona. Langley was drawn to UArizona Nursing because of its rural health focus and its strong mentorship opportunities.

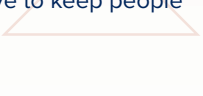


“It was a joy to mentor Carrie Langley during her doctoral program at the UArizona College of Nursing,” says Marylyn Morris McEwen, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dr. Langley’s academic advisor, dissertation chair and RWJF Scholars mentor. “Her dissertation research, ‘Transitions from the Rural Jail to the Rural Community for Adults with Mental Illness,’ included examination of the Arizona rural justice system. Dr. Langley will participate in examining current probation procedures, develop policies and procedures to improve quality, and promote standardization, consistency, and coordination of probation procedures statewide. Dr. Langley’s rural nursing and public health leadership has been recognized by state, regional and national organizations.”

Asked about her relentless drive to succeed in both the academic and professional realms, Dr. Langley’s response is simple. “I really enjoy helping others and I really enjoy scholarship” she says. “During my career I’ve observed the deficit in services that are available for individuals, so that’s a big part of my motivation. I feel that we can do better in rural communities, and maybe I can be part of that.” As for her passion for learning, Dr. Langley, who closed the book on her PhD program in January and started the DNP program a week later, is passionate about education’s power to improve the lives of others.



As a recipient of a Robert Wood Johnson scholarship, which focuses on growing the next generation of nurse leaders, she knows the value of mentorship and leadership. And as an assistant professor of practice with UArizona’s School of Sociology’s Care, Health & Society program, she puts that knowledge into practice, guiding students who are interested in entering the helping professions. “I’m really interested in growing the next generation and making sure they have what they need to be successful,” she says. But beyond that, she’s interested in the health and betterment of the health professions as a whole. It’s a hard-won knowledge. “It’s something we’ve seen coming out of the pandemic,” she says. “You can burn out really easily. We have to take care of each other broadly, not just in nursing or medicine or in the hospital environment, but exclusively throughout the helping professions. That also fuels me, the belief that we have to keep people motivated to want to be in these professions.”



# UArizona Nursing's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strives for Inclusive Excellence for All

By Jason Gelt

The University of Arizona College of Nursing has a history of striving to create an equitable learning and working environment for its diverse workforce and student body. But not until recently did it set those values in stone by creating an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) Task Force to engage the UArizona Nursing community in developing recommendations to improve individual and systemic inequities to advance Inclusive Excellence within our organization.

The Task Force was created during the tumultuous summer of 2020, after the murder of George Floyd stirred a national sense of urgency to address systemic barriers to equality. Dean Ki Moore approached Clinical Assistant Professor Timian Godfrey, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, and Senior Program Coordinator José Muñoz to see if they would lead the College's efforts.

"It was humbling, and I understood the responsibility when I said yes to this charge," Muñoz says. "It is critical to center ED&I at the core of our College and not just an afterthought. We need to be intentional and make it part of who we are. We are all functions of the system that we learn and live in; a system that has taught us how to think about ourselves and others, interact with others and understand what is expected of us."

"As an organization dedicated to the education and training of our nation's future nurses, healthcare providers, health system leaders, and researchers, we are uniquely positioned to greatly impact the lives and well-being of our patients, their families and communities in a meaningful way," Dr. Godfrey says. "Also, as part of the Code of Ethics for Nurses, we have a commitment to society and social justice. If our



**Assistant Professor Timian Godfrey, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC**

graduates are expected to provide the highest quality care and address health disparities, then behaviors of inclusivity, cultural humility, and excellence must be modeled and taught during the educational experience.”

The need for action was clear and the ED&I Task Force quickly leaped into the process. The creation of the ED&I Task Force was presented at the first College forum, when the opportunity to participate was opened up to all faculty and staff. The Task Force’s first meeting was in September. So far, a large part of the Task Force’s activity has focused on listening to the college community and learning about the various needs and growth opportunities. “This year has been the year of discovery to strategically think about how the College of Nursing can create an authentic environment in the long term,” Muñoz says, elaborating that

the long-term goal is to develop an Office of ED&I for the College.

The ED&I Task Force identified four key areas – or pillars – where it plans to develop, recommend, and implement strategies, opportunities and increased visibility for advancing Inclusive Excellence across the broader UArizona Nursing community: Faculty/ Staff Initiatives, Student Initiatives, Admissions/Curriculum Initiatives, and Community Engagement Initiatives. Achievements include the development of an ED&I website, an inclusive excellence statement, a pronoun statement, UArizona Nursing Values statements, customized diversity statement for job postings, ED&I resources for faculty and staff, and an ED&I strategic plan. Additionally, task force members, Chris Sogge and Jill Hagaman, have created a successful monthly ED&I lunch and learn for faculty and staff. The efforts are connected with the broader efforts going on throughout the University of Arizona Health Sciences community, including the UAHS LGBTQ+ group and the UAHS Office of ED&I.

“I’ve been fortunate to take part in all of the pillars and am amazed at the dedication, innovation, and progress that has been accomplished by the ED&I Task Force,” Dr. Godfrey says. “Highlighting the incredible nature of the Task Force, each member has voluntarily invested time and energy above and beyond their normal workload, with additional resource strain from the pandemic, to enhance ED&I at the CON.”

Dr. Godfrey is confident that ED&I will be normalized into the College’s daily work, routine, behavior



and organization and she knows from personal experience how pivotal this work is. “As a Navajo, Hawaiian-Japanese woman from historically marginalized communities, I have personally witnessed the impact systemically created social determinants have on the health of populations,” she says. “I can also attest to the tremendous, positive change cultural humility and diversely representative care can have on the health of a community. Therefore, I am committed to creating education and learning experiences congruent with ED&I to improve health equity and health justice.”

Similarly, Muñoz’s background has driven his passion for issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. “I never got involved with diversity; diversity got involved with me,” he says. “As a Latino professional, I am used to navigating two worlds.” Growing up in the rural border town of Rio Rico, Ariz., he was fortunate to have a strong and supportive family that encouraged him to pursue his dreams. “Today, I am able to reap my parent’s sacrifice and perseverance,” he says. “But although times have changed, I still observe challenges my community and I endured – issues ranging from social class, immigration status, heritage language, and learning disabilities. As a whole, we have to pay more attention to populations that have been ignored for such a long time. I remain optimistic and hopeful. I am inspired by all other people who are also working for change.”

Thus far, the future looks bright for the Task Force and the success of ED&I efforts throughout the College. Faculty and staff are receptive to and eager for change and leadership



**Senior Program Coordinator**  
**José Muñoz**

has been encouraging. “We are having conversations with each other and with leadership,” Muñoz says. “My hopes for the Task Force are to continue to drive change and transition into the ED&I committee, eventually to continue to co-create and co-inspire an emerging future for our College that values the well-being of all.”

Dr. Godfrey echoes that sentiment: “Members of our community at the College of Nursing are truly incredible, and leadership has been so supportive in quality improvement initiatives around ED&I. If we keep the trajectory going, then I expect to see integration of ED&I into central processes, curriculum, and organizational structure. These adjustments and changes are needed to achieve Inclusive Excellence and there are so many people in the CON who are committed to making it happen.”

## *Psychosocial Oncology Society Awards*

# **Dr. Terry Badger**

## *The Jimmie Holland Lifetime Achievement Award*

By Jason Gelt

University of Arizona College of Nursing professor Terry A Badger, PhD, RN, has been awarded the Jimmie Holland Memorial Award from the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS). Dr. Badger was chosen because of her distinguished leadership in the field of psychosocial oncology, with outstanding contributions I leadership, training, research, clinical practice, and service to APOS.

The Jimmie Holland Memorial Award honors an APOS or psycho-oncology community member recognized for making a unique contribution

considered to be a highly creative or pioneering innovation or activity that advances the field of psycho-oncology. The award is unique in its recognition as Jimmie Holland as a pioneer and chief innovator of our time, as well as recognizes her enormous contribution as mentor.

Dr. Badger is the Eleanor Bauwens Endowed Chair and Professor at the University of Arizona College of Nursing. She is the Chair of the





Community and Systems Health Science Division and also Professor in The University of Arizona Department of Psychiatry and the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health. She has published more 125 papers in peer reviewed journals and book chapters, led over 30 extramurally funded grants, and delivered more than 150 presentations at regional, national, and international conferences.

Dr. Badger is internationally recognized for her substantive

research focusing on depression, symptom management and quality of life among cancer survivors and their families. She is a pioneer and leader in the field of psychosocial oncology research among cancer survivor-caregiver dyads and in reducing health disparities among Latinas with breast cancer and their informal caregivers. For three decades, she has tested and continues to test psychosocial support interventions with the goal of improving the lives of the growing legions of cancer survivors and their informal caregivers.

“

*I am humbled and honored to receive this award named after one of the pioneers in psycho-oncology. It is especially an honor because I knew Jimmie Holland. She was always willing to talk about research and supportive care for cancer survivors and their caregivers. She was truly an inspirational leader in psycho-oncology.*

”

~ Terry A. Badger, PhD, RN

She has published groundbreaking landmark papers on the topic of interdependence of survivor and caregiver outcomes and developed an inter-individual model of distress, which provides sound theoretical grounding for dyadic psychosocial interventions. She is founder of the Symptoms, Health, Innovations, Equity (SHINE) research group that seeks to improve symptom management and quality of life for cancer survivors and their informal caregivers.

Dr. Badger is currently the principal investigator, and the SHINE group members are co-investigators, on two National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grants devoted to the management of psychological distress and cancer- and treatment-related symptoms among survivors of solid tumor cancers and their informal caregivers. Her current research tests optimal personalized sequencing of interventions and determines if addressing depressive symptoms allows cancer survivors and caregivers to cognitively

reframe beliefs regarding the efficacy of their actions towards symptom management.

Dr. Badger is committed to nursing education and preparing a new generation of researchers and practitioners. Since 2000, she has graduated over 45 PhD and DNP students, over 25 of them as a major professor. Dr. Badger's professional service is extensive and includes serving as a: reviewer for health sciences research, education, and practice journals; conference organizer; advisory board member; president of professional societies; reviewer of grants for the American Cancer Society, NIH, and numerous foundations; and consultant to community mental health organizations. She is a Past President and Fellow of the American Psychosocial Oncology Society.

Dr. Badger will receive a recognition award during the APOS awards ceremony in March as well as a \$1,000 honorarium.



# **UArizona Nursing** **Professor's** **Infant Massage** **Study**

***Looks to Improve Health  
of Mothers and Infants***



Professor Aleeca Bell, PhD, RN, CNM

By Jason Gelt

Funded by a four-year \$2,437,784 National Institute of Health (NIH) Research Project Grant (RO1), UArizona Nursing Associate Professor Aleeca Bell, PhD, RN, CNM, plans to launch a randomized clinical trial (RCT) aimed at investigating the effects of a multisensory infant massage on mother-infant synchrony – known as reciprocal behaviors that promote a mutually rewarding interaction. The massage has the potential to improve attachment between mother and baby as well as child development.

The intervention – which will be tested on mothers with early life adversity – has the potential to increase early mother-infant synchrony, and promote a better functioning oxytocin system. Oxytocin, a naturally occurring

hormone released during childbirth that helps promote maternal bonding, is known to aid in developing positive social attachment, empathy, and mood. Mutually rewarding mother-infant synchrony has also been shown to positively affect infant attachment and healthy brain development in the baby.

This intervention has been researched for 30 years in primarily pre-term infants in the NICU, but Dr. Bell's study will focus on full-term healthy babies. "We want to promote positive mother-infant interaction, but there's limited research to show us what works in a cost-effective way," she says. "This multi-sensory infant massage is low-cost, easy to learn, and can be applied

as soon as the baby's born. The mother applies the infant massage, but any caretaker or clinician can easily teach it."

The scientific literature demonstrates that higher oxytocin levels in blood and saliva are associated with better mother-infant synchrony, but a unique element of Dr. Bell's study is that it looks in greater detail at the oxytocin pathway to determine epigenetic effects (i.e., how oxytocin is regulated). "In this RCT, we hypothesized that moms with a history of early life adversity will demonstrate lower mother-infant synchrony due in part to a dysregulated oxytocin system," Dr. Bell says. "We theorize that our intervention will lead to greater mother-infant synchrony and a better functioning oxytocin system."

During the three-month intervention, participating mothers will give the 15-minute infant massage daily, because three months is the earliest that mother-infant synchrony can be reliably measured. More than just a massage, the technique is geared toward teaching new moms how to engage with their infant. There will also be a control group who will come to all the study sessions to donate blood and answer questionnaires, but they will receive an educational intervention about safe infant care.

The moms and babies will be videotaped during their interactions, after which video coders will complete the painstaking process of micro-coding behaviors. "We use a highly rigorous method that only requires three minutes of video recorded behavior to measure frame-by-frame the mother's and the baby's gaze, affect, touch and speech," Dr. Bell says. She points out that most researchers who study mother-infant interactions use a more subjective method where coders are trained to reliably examine segments of recordings to rate the quality of that interaction. "Another unique aspect of the study is that it's a very objective, quantitative way to measure behavior," she says.

Currently, Dr. Bell is hiring staff for the project, but she hopes to begin recruiting participants in January. Though the recruitment sites have yet to be determined, Dr. Bell has already set in place a draft of safety guidelines to make the process safer during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recruiting will be done over the phone versus in person and when participants do need to come to the College for study visits, masks and social distancing will be required. Appointment times will also be limited and staggered to avoid waiting room interactions as much as possible.

Once this study is completed, Dr. Bell hopes to enhance her research with further inquiries. One extension is to follow vulnerable mother-infant dyads for a longer period of time to ascertain broader biobehavioral health outcomes, and to determine epigenetic effects of the massage in the infant. Another goal is to enable clinicians to implement teaching the infant massage, testing at multiple sites, so that it can eventually become standard of care.

Dr. Bell, who practiced as a Certified Nurse Midwife for seven years prior to entering academia, has an unwavering commitment to improve the wellbeing of mothers and babies in the perinatal period. She seeks to promote a positive birth experience for women and encourage optimal mother-infant interaction. "The same passion I had as a clinician is what drives my research," she says. "As a clinician I wanted to promote physiologic birth and to help moms and babies get off to a great start – to help them fall in love with each other. These are the same desires that drive my research questions."

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## Faculty Spotlight:

# Jocelyn Nelms

### *Reflects on her Career and the State of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Nursing Education*

By Jason Gelt

In a national moment when racism has finally been recognized as a public health crisis, engaging in dialogue about ways to address issues of inequality in health care professions is essential. Since colleges are at the forefront of providing training that can help eliminate disparities related to a patient's race or ethnicity it's especially important to highlight the achievements of educators with an understanding of those goals.

In recognition of Black History Month, we reached out to University of Arizona Nursing faculty member and alumnus Jocelyn Nelms, MS, NEd, RN to hear about her career as well as her thoughts on the topic of equity, diversity and inclusion. A nurse for over 20 years and a nurse educator for over 13 years, Nelms earned her Masters of Science degree in Nursing with an emphasis in Nursing Education in 2009. Since then, she has become well-known for her passion for patient education and teaching the next generation of nurses -- including



Jocelyn Nelms, MS, NEd, RN

classroom, simulation, skills labs and clinical practicum. She has presented at local, national, and international conferences in Nursing and simulation education. She serves as course chair as well as a committee chair and is a member of the Arizona Simulation Network and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. In addition she has achieved honors including UArizona Nursing's Old Main Brick Award for faculty excellence, and was a nominee for the Athena Valley of the Sun's Honoring Athena Inspired Leaders Award for amazing Arizona



women making a difference in our communities.

Like many in the nursing profession, Nelms came to her passion at a young age. Although her father initially discouraged her from pursuing nursing because of the hurdles his mother and aunt faced in the profession, she took inspiration from her grandmother's career. That experience included acting as a Labor & Delivery Nurse, a Community Health Nurse and General Medical Surgical Nurse. While she worked in a variety of health care settings as a Licensed Practical Nurse and was looked up to by her community, barriers and limited resources prevented her from obtaining a Registered Nurse license. "I saw her as a positive role model, however, and I wanted to go further than she was able to," Nelms says. "I made up my mind to pursue my Bachelor of Science in nursing and become one of the first people in my family to start and finish at a University and obtain my degree."

As a UArizona Nursing student, Nelms was one of the few ethnic minority students in the cohort. She engaged with fellow students from various backgrounds and nationalities and built long-lasting friendships. At the same time, she lacked peers she could identify with and sometimes had to go outside the college for student support services. She credits faculty like Marylyn McEwen for making her feel heard and included. "These teachers assisted us in understanding that it was our job to reflect on those feelings, assess what is needed, and advocate for ourselves and our patients to obtain the resources that were necessary," she says.



Jocelyn Nelms receives the Old Main Brick Award

Nelms' greatest role model is her father. A hardworking man dedicated to his family and his community, he faced challenges in his pursuit of higher education but overcame them to eventually earn his Associate's degree and Bachelor's degree. "He taught me to set goals, determine the path that you want to take to get there, create a plan B because barriers and road blocks will occur," Nelms says. "Without my father encouraging me to study, being a sounding board when things got tough in college and reminding me of the goals that I had set, I am not sure I would have made it through nursing school."

Nelms' path to her current profession began in her study groups in the University of Arizona College of Medicine library. Fellow students said she should consider becoming a nursing instructor because of her talent for guiding them toward success on exams. "This planted the seed in me to pursue nursing

education,” she says. She went on to obtain her Master of Science in Nursing with an emphasis on nursing education and once the opportunity presented itself she started teaching. “That’s still the best part of my job: when you can explain something to a student, especially when in a clinical rotation, and they get it and the ‘light-bulb’ comes on.”

Despite the joy she gets from her work, Nelms is acutely aware of the inequalities that underpin society, especially in health care. “Racism, overt and covert, has permeated all areas of our society,” she says. “It is hard to see at times that your thoughts and concerns are not appreciated or listened to, or taken seriously all because of the color of your skin. This means that sometimes health care providers, loan officers, etc., might not explain things fully, omit important things, be afraid to care for people in certain areas leading to inappropriate or poor care, and decreased resources.” She stresses the importance of acknowledging racism and confronting the wounds and injustices of our past. Otherwise, she says, “We’ll keep ripping scabs every time ‘something’ happens. At some point, scars will be left as a reminder of the ‘healing’ that never happened.”

Nelms sees some improvements in classroom settings, although she stresses that social justice issues should be expanded to more than just Community Health courses. “One class might help address the existence of bias in relation to how we care for others, but more should be done. I appreciate the recognition of the problem but we often fall short of creating actual, sustainable change.” Change on a larger scale,

she says, will take big alterations on a community and public policy level. “I know that one interaction can make a patient, family or community feel valued. I also know that if policies do not change, if resources are not provided, if awareness is not extended to action, then we will continue to see inequities in our ethnic communities and communities with poor socioeconomic status.”

“The path toward improvement begins with acknowledging the existence of disparities,” Nelms says. “We must assess for health literacy, offer free classes where financially challenged community members can consult with health care providers, provide funding for follow-up visits and updated surveys to address cultural needs. She also believes it is extremely important for patients to see themselves in their health care providers as members of their community. It can make a patient more adherent to recommended treatments, make a person feel more valued and cared for and make a person feel part of society at large,” she says.

For students of color who are considering a career in nursing, she is quick to offer encouragement. “I would remind them that the majority of their peers do not understand where they’ve come from or the amount of work it took to get here. If it was easy for you, then you’re privileged, and you owe no apology for that. If it was difficult, you made it, but more challenge lies ahead. Though you may have worked harder to get here, nobody owes you anything. You are not alone, though. Find a Mentor because racism exists within healthcare and yes, within nursing.”



Student Achievements

***UArizona College of Nursing***

# **Class of 2021:**

***Chloe Littzen***

By Jason Gelt

When she was a child, Chloe Littzen was diagnosed with a chronic health condition. The harrowing experience was a big factor in her decision to pursue a career in nursing and her eventual selection of pediatrics as a specialty. “I ended up caring for the children who were most like me as a child in the hospital and in the community,” she says.

Littzen, who also holds associates, bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing, will earn her PhD in nursing with a minor in integrative health, in May, 2021. She chose the University of Arizona College of Nursing to pursue her PhD because of positive stories from alumni who had obtained their PhDs from the College. "I looked at several different programs, but ultimately it was the faculty that drew me to UArizona alongside the rigorous online format that wouldn't restrict me to one geographical area," she says.

Littzen describes her time at UArizona Nursing as life changing. "I wouldn't have changed a thing about my experience," she says. "The faculty, my colleagues, and the learning opportunities have all been amazing. My PhD has been such a rewarding experience and I am grateful for the opportunity every day."

When she has her diploma in-hand, she will enter the workforce strengthened by the knowledge that nothing can be accomplished alone and that only through teamwork can success be truly earned. "I think collaboration and seeking information from your peers are integral to success and also your well-being within doctoral education," she says. "That takeaway shapes how I interact in life and work every day."

One of Littzen's most important achievements during her time in the program is her timely dissertation study, "Young Adult Nurse Work-Related Well-Being, Contemporary Practice Worldview, Resilience, and Co-Worker Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Last year she was awarded a \$1,000 PhD Student Research Grant to pursue her study, which was inspired by her experience working as a bedside nurse in a busy pediatric intensive care unit.

"Young adult nurses, defined as currently practicing nurses between the ages of 18-30, have the most suboptimal work-related well-being, highest turnover intentions, and the lowest overall job satisfaction across practicing nurses," Littzen says.

"I chose this topic because as a new graduate, and later a novice young adult nurse, I practiced within the critical care environment and ultimately experienced diminished well-being and burnout," Littzen says. "This



▶ ▶ ▶ Chloe Littzen (R) with her faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela Reed

**“The faculty, my colleagues, and the learning opportunities have all been amazing. My PhD has been such a rewarding experience and I am grateful for the opportunity every day,”**

**~ Chloe Littzen, MSN, RN,  
AE-C, PhD Candidate**

experience inspired me to assist young adult nurses to understand and advocate for their well-being, as well as work towards the development of strategies to prevent negative consequences of suboptimal well-being in the workplace.”

In the course of her research, Littzen learned that it is primarily systemic issues in healthcare that negatively impact young adult nurses’ work-related well-being. “There appears to be a misalignment between the way the young adult nurse perceives nursing within the American healthcare system and the way that system expects nurses and nursing to be or act,” she says, pointing out that young adult nurses experience significant levels of moral distress and have suboptimal work-related well-being placing them at risk for burnout, severe fatigue, poor quality of life, patient care errors, and intent to leave. “Future research is needed to examine the moral dimensions of young adult nurse work-related well-being,” she says.

When her time at UArizona Nursing has concluded, Littzen will have fond memories of her college experience – ones that center around the joys of human interaction, something many have yearned for during the travails of COVID-19. In particular, she recalls attending the 2019 Nursing Theory Annual Conference at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, when she joined her advisor, Dr. Pamela Reed, and her colleague Dr. Carrie Langley, for Italian food after the last day of the conference. “We got to talk about life, nursing theory – one of my favorite things! – our plans for the future, and just enjoy being present with each other. It was so nice to be together with both of them in person and just be humans for a bit.”

Speaking of the future, Littzen’s immediate plans after her rigorous studies are to take the summer off, spend time with her loved ones and practice a lot of yoga. After that, she intends to work towards publishing some papers from her dissertation. In the fall, she will be teaching at the University of Portland School of Nursing, where she hopes to develop a proposal for her next study – an examination of the moral dimensions of young adult nurse work-related well-being. Her desire to make a difference in the world of nursing doesn’t stop there, though. She says, “Additionally, I am working on developing an undergraduate nursing yoga program to help future young adult nurses learn how to care for themselves in a safe community setting prior to entering the workforce.”



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