Creating an anti-racist University

At the OHSU School of Nursing we are strongly committed to advancing our core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and combating racism. Strategic priorities for the School during the next 12 months will include action steps specific to these areas of focus. While these steps are being finalized, proposed actions include:

- identifying a framework/model to guide diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the OHSU School of Nursing;
- establishing a resource repository for DEI and anti-racism, ongoing learning and prevention of microaggressions, expansion of multicultural and health disparities curriculum development, formalization of the Diversity Advisory Group into a standing committee; and
- development of an action plan for combating racism.

We are proud of our hard-working and highly competent healthcare professionals. The degrees include:

- 367 Baccalaureate Degrees
- 89 Master’s Degrees
- 3 Doctor of Philosophy, Nursing
- 38 Doctor of Nursing Practice
- 5 Post Master Certificates

This year OHSU granted a total of 502 degrees to School of Nursing graduates. We are proud of our hard-working and highly competent healthcare professionals.

For additional resources on anti-racism: www.ohsu.edu/center-for-diversity-inclusion/anti-racist-resources

COVID coping stories

In response to the OHSU School of Nursing call for COVID coping stories, Camryn Danielson, recent alums of OHSU School of Nursing (class of 2019) Portland campus said, “Never in a million years did I think I would start my nursing career off in the beginning of a pandemic, and to say it’s been a steep learning curve wouldn’t even begin to cover it. I think the most important lesson that we’re learning from COVID-19 is that we truly are social creatures, who have immense capacity for compassion and empathy. I’ve seen communities band together to provide much-needed supplies for those in need. I’ve seen healthcare teams go above and beyond to give our patients the best possible care we can provide, and I’ve seen the support that our communities have for our healthcare providers. I’m happy to be a nurse, I’m even happier to be a community health nurse, and as awful as it is to help our patients through some very serious challenges (physical and mental), I love serving the rural communities in Oregon.”

Student highlight: Alyssa Jacobs, Monmouth campus

Alyssa Jacobs graduated this spring with a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the OHSU School of Nursing’s Monmouth campus. She said, “I believe in OHSU’s values and mission as an organization. They not only reflect what I believe personally, but I also appreciate that their educational delivery centered around providing holistic care.”

During the pandemic, Jacobs has simultaneously continued her studies, worked as a certified nursing assistant and volunteered for Meals on Wheels. At Salem Health Hospital, she has cared for suspected and confirmed coronavirus patients on a designated COVID-19 unit. “This has given me the unique perspective on how COVID-19 has impacted our community,” Jacobs said. “This pandemic has made me a more compassionate person and I am so proud and honored to be part of such a selfless and giving profession.” Jacobs has seen first-hand as a volunteer for Meals on Wheels (picturesd) through Marion Folk Food Share how important food delivery is for her community’s more vulnerable residents.

“The feeling of being able to help our community, whether that be helping them with their daily needs or just being able to provide a shoulder to cry on, has been truly a blessing for me. I have had the opportunity to provide transportation for patients to get to doctors’ appointments, and I have also been able to help in other ways as a volunteer. This has made me a more compassionate person and I am so proud and honored to be part of such a selfless and giving profession.”

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Warm Greetings to our SoN Community.

By Susan Bakwell-Sachs, dean and vice president of nursing affairs

Our lives were upended in early March by the COVID-19 pandemic. SoN faculty and staff undertook the enormous and unprecedented task of transitioning courses to remote delivery. We are proud of the members of our community who have also been caring for COVID patients, at OHSU and around Oregon. As we prepare for a gradual re-opening, we are mindful of what remains forever changed and all that we have been learning together to inform how we go forward.

The senseless and alarming deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have renewed an OHSU collective commitment to diversity, social equity, and inclusion and more specific actions to combat racism. Each of us carries unconscious biases that we can unlearn and consciously practice to change. We can also learn how to be effective anti-racism allies in our everyday lives. I hope you will help us in this community-wide effort.
A s the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the country and threatened to turn educational institutions upside down, School of Nursing leaders acted swiftly to preserve core missions following shelter-in-place orders.

Clinical exercise research goes virtual in days

The shutdown of the state in March “happened so abruptly there couldn’t be anything worse,” said Kerri Winters-Stone, Ph.D., research professor in the School of Nursing and co-leader, Cancer Prevention and Control Program, OHSU Knight Cancer Institute, School of Medicine.

The National Cancer Institute is funding two $4 million, five-year studies to test exercise interventions and outcomes in cancer survivors. “We work with highly vulnerable populations and our interventions are in-person group exercise classes, one of the most discouraged activities in COVID,” she said, noting that among the first things shuttered were health clubs and gyms. It also meant the end of in-person testing, including blood draws and performance assessments.

One study based in Salem involved older men with prostate cancer. As the shutdown approached, the researchers informed their subjects that a Thursday that would be their last in-person class and sent them home with their equipment and all the webcams the team could find. By Monday, they were uploading to video-based exercise class. “All have advanced prostate cancer, and most aren’t tech giants,” Winters-Stone said.

“We became novice IT support, and literally three of us were online at the same time getting people onboard,” she said. The researchers tried to retain key elements of the now on-line classes but faced some of the same tech issues people new to video-conferencing experienced. “Everyone had their cameras on and the same time,” she said with a laugh. “It was loud and bothersome like our classes, but the men got to laugh and joke. Luckily, they already knew each other.”

The research decided it was important to keep the men together as a source of social support even if the findings are eventually disallowed.

The second study focuses on couples coping with cancer. The research group packaged exercise equipment into a cart and created a drive-thru delivery service on OHSU’s South Waterfront. Couples exercise together, with the goal of determining whether training as a pair can improve patient and partner outcomes and relationships.

“We don’t want when we get the all-clear notice to resume in-person studies,” Winters-Stone said, adding that they hope it’s in 2021. “It’s an evolving decision, but my team has shown tremendous resilience.”

COVID pushes telehealth learning in FNP education

“COVID has allowed us to recognize that the next generation of FNs have a much better understanding of different delivery modalities beyond face-to-face delivery of health care,” said Jacqueline Webb, D.N.P., F.N.P., associate professor and director of the Family Nurse Practitioner Program.

Until the pandemic hit, the program used standardized patients in real settings for clinical training. Now, the program has moved to include telehealth as an important tangential learning tool for OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) experiences with live patients via telehealth.

“Our program gives FNs the skills not only to care for the patient, but to understand the structural limitations that many patients experience, such as lack of bandwidth in some rural areas,” Webb said. “FNPs can advocate for better infrastructure and increase health care in these areas.” As for the future, Webb says that telehealth is here to stay and will play an important adjunct role in extending care to vulnerable and distance populations. Our curriculum teaches FNs how to impact health care policies. Beyond the pandemic, nursing will need to advocate for continued Telehealth reimbursement in the primary care setting.

Susan Bakewell-Sachs, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. dean, says that for advanced practice programs, telehealth will be a routine part of what is learned and how care is delivered, and innovative pilots will become normal simulations in those programs. “Faculty are reflecting on the learnings from this period and considering what to carry forward. Permanent advances and changes are the result.”

Retooling clinical education with virtual simulations

Winter term was ending, spring break was approaching, and hospitals were preparing to lock their doors to all but COVID-19 and emergency cases. Educators faced the dilemma: how to keep students’ clinical education rolling without access to live patients.

Nicklaus Miehl, Ph.D., R.N., clinical assistant professor and simulation coordinator on the Monmouth campus, tells how simulation faculty across the state quickly coalesced to evaluate simulation software, create faculty and student orientation materials and move students into a virtual clinical environment—all in three frenzied weeks.

When students returned spring term, they spent the first week taking a newly developed online COVID-19 module, providing a strong context of why the school had to switch to virtual clinicals, according to Miehl. Faculty then chose specific courses to emulate clinical scenarios.

“The platform, vSim, presents students with one to two cases a week. The patient on the screen is animated, almost like a videogame. Students see medical orders for the patient and make assessments and interventions. Simulation faculty on each campus debrief students weekly and walk them through some of their decisions,” he said.

“Faculty appreciated the learning it brought to students and noticed how vSim helped students with clinical reasoning, prep for state boards and the opportunity to go back in for more practice. If something wasn’t working, faculty responded well and made adjustments,” he said.

“We want to virtual learning spring term because we had to,” Miehl said. “Now we’re diving into this experience from vSim and can see it continuing, maybe in a classroom setting as an adjunct to clinical experience. This is a scalable option that we’re assessing.”

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Graduation Awards 2020

This year graduation was held in virtual settings across Oregon from the comfort of our own homes to celebrate the Class of 2020.

Statewide student awards

The Jean E. Boyle Memorial award Undergraduate recipient: Elizabeth Galvin, Ashland Graduate recipient: Kaylay Jo Hodges, PNP, Portland campus

The Community Service Award Undergraduate recipient: Acocili Flores, Klamath Falls Graduate recipient: Alex Rodighiero, FNP, La Grande campus

The Carol A. Lindeman Award Undergraduate recipient: Kendall Wynne, Portland campus Graduate recipient: Mady Stovall, P.D., Portland campus

The Henrietta Doltz Phahy Award Undergraduate recipient: Araya Garcia, Monmouth campus Graduate recipient: Isaac Thelin, PMHNP, Portland campus

The Rural and Frontier Nursing Award Undergraduate recipient: Jacqueline Russell, La Grande Graduate recipient: James Cook, FNP, La Grande

The Transcultural Nursing Award Undergraduate recipient: Ed Peters, La Grande Graduate recipient: Marcus Gabriel Jr., PNP, Portland campus

Diversity cords

Andrea Ruiz Corral, Monmouth Campus Cindy Mariot Milan, Portland Campus Sydney Jessica Neti, Klamath Falls Kathleen Tombrook, Portland Campus

DNP awards

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Beta Psi Chapter announced the inaugural 2020 Outstanding DNP awards to students graduating from the OHSU Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and conducted projects which exemplify the research and practice of an extraordinary 2020.

Hannah Billiet, DNP, CNP-ACPC: DNP Project: Evaluating the Implementation of the 2017 Pediatric Blood Pressure Guidelines Within a Pediatric Nephrology Clinic

Lindsay Frances Underwood DNP-ACPC: DNP Project: Pediatric Unintended Exstubation: Standardizing Endotracheal Tube Management

Jennifer Ham, DNP, CNM, NCMP: DNP Project: Improving Access to Evidence-Based Lifestyle Interventions for People with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in a Multi-Specialty Clinic: A Quality Improvement Project

Family members participate in a virtual pinning for Klamath falls student, Lela Spreadley, who graduated with a bachelor’s in nursing.