

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Katherine Bradley**, Ph.D. and associate professor was awarded the Oregon Public Health Association's 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award at the OPHA Annual Nursing Section meeting.
- The National Institutes of Health has awarded **Elise Erickson** a \$938,215 grant for her study, *The Clock is Ticking: Epigenetic Age Acceleration as a Biomarker of Uterine Function in Pregnancy* which will "shed light on the complex integrated relationship between social and physical environmental exposure and biological changes that underpin maternal health disparities."
- The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners has appointed the Global Health Center Special Interest Group members. **Dr. Asma Taha** will participate as Chair of this group.
- In our 2020 round, two Hartford Awards for Research and Practice were granted to fund a multi-institutional project that will add to the body of knowledge around end-of-life and the preferences of individuals in various Hispanic sub-groups. With these projects, preliminary data will be gathered to reassess the role of cultural factors in "advance directive" use among three generations of Hispanics of Mexican origin in Oregon and Texas.

**Project 1**, whose Principal Investigator (PI) is **Lissi Hansen**, Ph.D., R.N., will be based at OHSU SoN and recruit from our students and their families.

**Project 2** will recruit SoN students, and their families, at UTEP. **Hector Olvera-Alvarez**, Ph.D., P.E., Sr. Associate Dean of Research and director of the Ph.D. program here at our OHSU School of Nursing is PI and will share responsibilities with Co-PI **Guillermina Solis**, Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.N.P., G.N.P.-C., Assistant Professor and director of the FNP concentration at UTEP SoN.

- Our Hartford Center of Gerontological Excellence at OHSU is pleased to announce three recipients of The Hearst Foundations' Endowed Scholarship for AY 2020-21. **Lorenzo Ortega**, Family Nurse Practitioner program, and **Lauren Shields** and **Annabel Walker** both in the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) program.

- **Quin Denfeld**, Ph.D., assistant professor, was recently honored with the Linfield Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award, a \$50,000 grant award from the Medical Research Foundation, and selected as a finalist for the American Heart Association New Investigator Award through the Council on Cardiovascular & Stroke Nursing.



Quin Denfeld, Ph.D.

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

### Randi Powell Sexton, F.N.P

By **Lee Lewis Husk**  
Northern Cheyenne tribal member Randi Powell Sexton, F.N.P. '20, is committed to improving tribal health.

Time spent with her grandmother on the Lame Deer Reservation in Montana and an anthropology degree from Southern Oregon University – which led to a trip to Sierra Leone where she shadowed a midwife – profoundly influenced the direction her life took.

"I saw the impact you could have on health care," she said after her return from Africa. Instead of going into anthropology, she applied to the OHSU/Ashland nursing program, graduating in 2015. "I wanted to be a nurse midwife but was exposed to emergency medicine and thought it was the coolest thing to save lives," she recalls of her three years in the ER. "Seeing trauma for that long wore on me, and I decided I wanted to work with people to prevent the disastrous impact of not having access to care."

Next stop: Portland's OHSU campus for a family nurse practitioner degree. She got help from HealthE STEPS\* and says that "it connected me with other students and diverse populations that I want to devote my life to."

Since completing the program in June, Sexton been working with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe in Longview, Wash. "I love my job and am seeing diverse patients of all ages with all kinds of disease states."

Sexton's long-term goal is to serve as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service where she can be assigned to the Indian Health Service. If accepted, she will be the third generation, along with her mother and grandmother, to bring health services to tribes through the IHS. The job would entail weeks-long stints in underserved reservations, typically in remote Navajo and South Dakota regions. "I can't imagine doing anything else," she says.

\*See article in this issue of Connections



Liam Directo,  
Portland campus  
graduate.

## OHSU launches Sprint for OHSU students

While our world continues to shift and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, OHSU students and trainees are hard at work. For many, their career path will place them on the front lines of Oregon's health care workforce, embodying OHSU's mission to promote health and well-being across Oregon. The COVID-19 crisis has created financial burdens for many — and OHSU students need your support now more than ever.

That's why we're launching the Sprint for OHSU Students, an initiative to raise at least \$25 million for scholarships and student support. Contributions to scholarships will go even further with an exciting match of \$1 for every \$2 donated to a qualifying Sprint for OHSU Students fund, while matching funds last.

Scholarships enable OHSU to recognize talent and merit, and to support exceptional students. And your support helps OHSU attract the best, brightest and most diverse students to meet Oregon's health care needs. We invite you to meet some of the outstanding students and alumni who will become tomorrow's health care leaders. **Please consider making a gift to support students today, at [Scholarships.SupportOHSU.org](http://Scholarships.SupportOHSU.org)**

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Editors: Christi Richardson-Zboralski and  
Mark Kembal  
Designer: Charlotte Woodward  
Photography: SoN community, Jordan Sleeth and  
OHSU Photography  
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## WEBINARS



### Nursing@noon webinar series

The imperative to come together and share resources to benefit the community and its members has defined the nursing profession for centuries.

Today, nurse-scientists are leaders in health care reform, and in responses to long-standing and emerging challenges that include viral pandemics, health disparities and institutional racism.

Join leaders of the OHSU School of Nursing at noon on the second Monday of each month for brief, informational updates on key issues for the School and our community. All sessions are offered at no charge. Webinars are scheduled monthly through April.

Learn more at [www.ohsu.edu/school-of-nursing/ohsu-nursing-noon](http://www.ohsu.edu/school-of-nursing/ohsu-nursing-noon)

### UPCOMING WEBINARS

#### Strengthening the Culture of the School of Nursing: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**January** Recently-arrived Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Diversity Dr. Karen Reifenstein believes all students need to have a sound road map to help them successfully navigate their academic and professional journey. Dr. Reifenstein's mission is to build upon OHSU School of Nursing core values of integrity, diversity, collaboration, innovation and excellence to enhance diversity within the School of Nursing and better reflect societal demographic trends.

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Join Dr. Reifenstein and Admissions colleagues to learn more about their commitment to building a nursing workforce that truly reflects the communities OHSU serves.

Please register on the website link: [www.ohsu.edu/school-of-nursing/ohsu-nursing-noon](http://www.ohsu.edu/school-of-nursing/ohsu-nursing-noon)

#### Health Equity Research at the School of Nursing: Vision and Opportunities

**February** Senior Associate Dean for Research Dr. Hector A. Olvera-Alvarez believes that "nurses are ideally positioned to accelerate the translation of research findings to the bedside and into the community, while addressing what's meaningful to Oregon and the nation."

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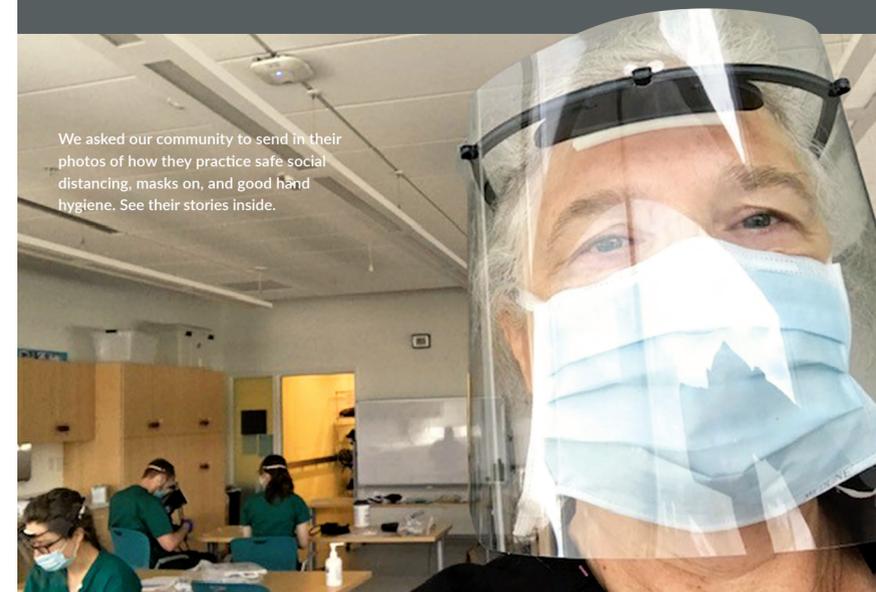
Dr. Olvera-Alvarez is expanding the collaborative reach of the SoN by integrating an interdisciplinary approach to conducting research that advances nursing practice. Specifically, working closely with faculty from across all of its campuses, the SoN is building innovative research programs that emerge from the School's signature areas of science of Health Equity and Integrative Biobehavioral sciences where OHSU will train the next generation of nurse-scientists.

# Connections

A PUBLICATION FROM THE OHSU SCHOOL OF NURSING

WINTER 2020

We asked our community to send in their photos of how they practice safe social distancing, masks on, and good hand hygiene. See their stories inside.



## Hello to our OHSU community,

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



I hope you and are staying safe and healthy during the continuing coronavirus pandemic. All campuses of the School of Nursing will continue on modified operations with remote delivery of didactic coursework, virtual and in-person simulation, and telehealth and in-person clinical experiences through at least winter term. It's important that we recognize the heroic contributions of nurses in caring for patients with COVID-19 and that we all do what we can to minimize the risk of transmission and illness to nurses and other health care professionals.

The SoN is taking actions to combat health disparities and structural racism, and build a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this newsletter you will read about specific examples in our education and research missions that exemplify our efforts. We want ALL members of our community to feel that they belong. This requires that they feel safe, be able to be themselves, and are able to do their best work.



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



## Diversity, equity and inclusion in action

By Cathy Carrol

From curating anti-racism resources to unconscious bias training, the commitment to advancing a diverse, culturally competent learning community and workforce is moving forward at the School of Nursing.



Karen Reifenstein, Ph.D., R.N.

Karen Reifenstein, Ph.D., R.N., Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Diversity, said the most recent phase of diversity, equity and inclusion work began last spring with strategic planning for priorities for the coming year.

SoN Professor Joanne Noone, Ph.D., R.N. said Dr. Reifenstein has helped focus on inclusion and campus climate this year by implementing forums for faculty, staff, and students to start dialogues around such issues. "Both of us are structuring webinars and bringing in speakers to look at different frameworks for equity and inclusion for our school," said Dr. Noone.

The webinars are planned for November and December and the SoN Diversity Advisory Group will likely set more for winter and spring. Drs. Noone and Reifenstein said they will be discussing with this group different models that will help guide the diversity, equity and inclusion work.

Dr. Reifenstein, who joined OHSU in February after serving as a Faculty Diversity Officer, and as the Director of School of Nursing Education for Diversity and Inclusion at The University of Rochester identified an opportunity to create an anti-racism repository of resources for faculty, staff and students. She tapped the expertise of Dr. Noone to help create this compilation of resources. Dr. Noone is also project manager of Advancing Health Equity through Student Empowerment & Professional Success (HealthE STEPS) and Diversity Team project director.

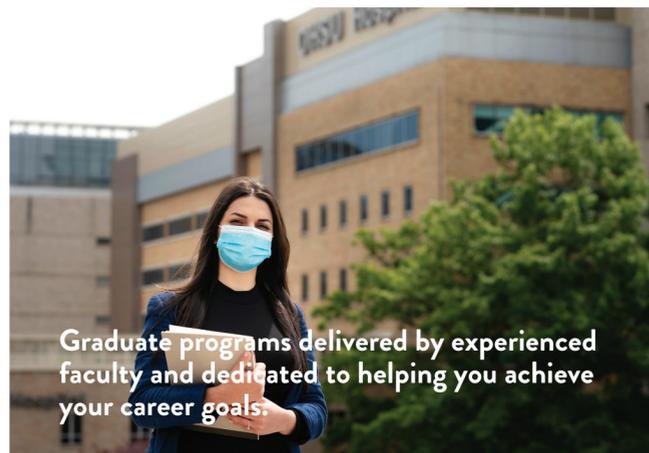
The resources are posted on the SoN's Diversity section. It includes a range of options, from the podcast, "How to Talk About Race and Racism," to media devoted to understanding Oregon's exclusionary history as well as its civil rights work, to recommended reading, such as "Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race," by Reni Eddo-Lodge.

This summer, the SoN also launched Unconscious Bias Training for undergraduate and graduate nursing students led by the OHSU Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Numerous studies conducted across the country have shown how unconscious bias contributes to imbalances in hiring, promotion and compensation for certain racial, ethnic and gender groups.

"The two-hour training was offered on all five campuses this summer and fall, from Ashland to La Grande. Shifting to a virtual platform allowed for the training to be more easily accessible to a wider audience," Dr. Reifenstein said.

Although plans for much of this work have been underway for a few years, a sharper focus for racial equality across America prompted the higher visibility response by the recent demonstrations from around the world.

"The 2020 protests have triggered conversations within nursing and nursing education nationally about the need for change within our systems," said Dr. Noone. "The conversations have happened not only at schools of nursing education, but within our hospital and healthcare systems," she said. "This has had an impact on people's understanding of the systemic need for change."



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## RESEARCH



## Research to explore health equity

By Cathy Carroll

A new research collaboration between the nursing schools of OHSU and the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) seems almost as if it was guided by destiny. The study, which involves comparing the cultural beliefs around end-of-life decisions in the two states, supports the long-term goal of improving care of Hispanics of Mexican origin. At the same time, it leverages some of the School of Nursing's signature elements — health equity science and gerontology research — to offer new ways of elevating the experience of nursing students. The goal of the collaboration is to advance knowledge in the fields of palliative and end-of-life care.



Hector A. Olvera-Alvarez, Ph.D., P.E.



Lissi Hansen, Ph.D.

Hector A. Olvera-Alvarez, Ph.D., P.E., senior associate dean of research at OHSU School of Nursing, said the elements required to launch the project quickly came together to support a broader objective. "One of the aims of my office is to increase our capacity to train the next generation of nursing scientists," he said. "OHSU is ideally positioned to do this because we have a more diverse group of future nursing scientists who embrace the challenge of procuring health equity." For two decades, his activities had focused on health disparities in Hispanic populations.

In Oregon, the Hispanic community growth rate is fourth in the U.S., comprising 12 percent of the state population. Partnering with UTEP, where the Hispanic population is 87 percent, can help Oregon understand how to address the aging needs of its Hispanics; and UTEP can gain insight into the experience of Hispanics beyond its regional population.

Dr. Olvera-Alvarez, principal investigator of the UTEP project, had also known that he had an abundance of expertise among the faculty at OHSU, such as that of Lissi Hansen, Ph.D., R.N., principal investigator of the OHSU project. She will lead the pilot project to determine differences in cultural factors associated with end-of-life preferences and advance-care planning among undergraduate nursing students, their parents and grandparents.

Dr. Hansen's passion for palliative care began when she was an ICU nurse and saw elderly patients from nursing homes receiving aggressive life-sustaining treatment, including intubation when their advance directives prohibited it. As an immigrant from Denmark, she said she and her students can share their struggles with language and cultural differences while pursuing an education.

"It's important for nurse scientists who teach undergraduates to be role models for opportunities in addition to bedside nursing," said Dr. Hansen. "Often undergraduates don't know there is a path for nurse scientists and what they can bring to the table — and even more so with diverse ethnic groups."

Co-Principal Investigator at UTEP, Dr. Guillermina Rincon Solis, said, "Some Latinos have not considered that they have a voice in their treatment plan. This is an opportunity to bring attention to the topic and prepare individuals to have that conversation."



## ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

## Alumna of the year emphasizes nurse-led care

Nicole Bennett, D.N.P., PMHNP-BC '09 and founder of Willamette Health and Wellness, has been selected as the OHSU School of Nursing Alumni Association's Alumna of the Year for 2020.

"Since graduation, Nicole has dedicated her career to nursing practice with our most vulnerable populations, children and adolescents struggling with mental health issues," said Margaret Scharf, D.N.P., P.H.N.M.P., F.N.P., OHSU Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program Director. "After working in health promotion and prevention research for 12 years, she pursued a career in nursing in order to impact the lives of children with mental health issues."

Since founding Willamette Health and Wellness, Dr. Bennett has expanded both the scale and methodology of delivering psychiatric and mental health care to children, adolescents and adults.



"She serves the underserved, Oregon's children with mental health problems, their families, and shares her expertise with the community, statewide and nationally," said Dr. Scharf. "Her practice promotes the treatment of children, adults and families and has expanded to include counselors and family therapists' services which includes parenting classes in the evenings for working parents."

Dr. Bennett received her award at the OHSU School of Nursing Winter Completion Ceremony on December 10.

Nicole Bennett, D.N.P., PMHNP-BC '09

## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

## Social distancing

We asked our community to send in their photos of how they practice safe social distancing, masks on, and good hand hygiene.

Send your photos with caption to Christi at richardc@ohsu.edu.



Above and right: OHSU Nurse-Midwifery Program Director and midwife, Dr. Cathy Emeis, embraced new protocols during COVID-19 to teach students in a safe environment. This shows students wearing their masks learning the art of midwifery during a skills lab.

Top: Sadie Boccard's three year old son was able to meet his new brother through the birthing center's lobby windows. Sadie is a Klamath Falls student.

Second row left: Love wins, even in a pandemic. Monmouth student, Aubrey Applegate, sent in this wedding photo. She said, "My husband and I just got married last week, and we celebrated our honeymoon with social distancing, wearing a mask, having hand sanitizer at all times, and antibacterial wipes for public spaces! We made the best of it and stayed safe at the same time!"

Second row right: Nick Miel, Interim Program Director of Statewide Simulation on the Monmouth campus, sent in this photo of his family on a recent hike at Silver Falls State Park

## On the cover:

The cover photo was sent in by Dr. Ginger Keller, assistant clinical professor on the Portland Campus. She said, "The photo was taken July 10 in one of the classrooms at MRSIC/RLSB. I sent the pic to my family with the caption: I am at work!"

"After a great deal of planning and re-planning amongst School of Nursing faculty, SimOps, SoN Administration, OHSU, Oregon Health Department, Oregon State Board of Nursing, etc. on July 10, I had my first face-to-face experience with a clinical group of students since before the end of Winter term. In this pic I am working with a clinical group of Summer Acc Bacc students in the first course in their program of study, Health Promotion. The students are practicing taking blood pressures.

In addition to the wearing of face masks, face shields are required when students are together in skills labs. We observe strict infection precautions in all of our skills lab sites."