**OHSU School of Nursing earns 2021 National League for Nursing Centers of Excellence™ distinction**

Twenty-three nursing programs from across the country and across the academic spectrum of higher education in nursing and leading teaching hospitals and clinical sites have been named 2021 National League for Nursing Centers of Excellence™. OHSU earned its distinction in the category Enhance student learning and professional development.

The process for applying started in 2019 and was borne out of Strategic Initiatives on Educational Standards led by Ann Sableman and Paula Godshalk-Skore. They led a series of sessions during 2019-2020 faculty forums to identify exemplars. After exploring options for best practices the group was enthusiastic about pursuing this designation with the overall goal of raising the level of excellent educational performance at OHSU.

Dean Bakewell-Sachs said, “This was a faculty-led decision and application process, based upon many years of focus and expertise on student learning and development. The application was a major undertaking in and of itself, which Joanne Neuros and a team led, and what is in the application represents broad and deep work across the entire school – programs and campuses – and why we earned this Center of Excellence designation.”

**Alumni, faculty, staff and friends rally in support of the school**

Thank you to the 27 OHSU School of Nursing alumni, faculty, staff and friends who combined to provide over $4,400 in support of student scholarships and general purposes during OHSU’s first Give Day on May 18. Final OHSU Give Day totals exceeded every goal set for the day, resulting in over $700,000 in support of OHSU’s mission areas from over 700 donors. Thank you to all our donors, whose support for students and programs allows the School of Nursing to extend its long tradition of peer-recognized excellence in clinical nursing education and nurse-scientist research programs. Matching funds are still available for student scholarship and support funds. Find out more at ohsufoundation.org/education.

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**NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Congratulations to Dr. Gail Armstrong for being among the 225 distinguished nurse leaders selected to join the 2021 class of fellows announced by the American Academy of Nursing.
- Dr. Karen Reifenstein was selected for the inaugural cohort of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Diversity Leadership Institute. She completed the program in June.
- Congratulations to Lisa Osborne-Smith for being included in the AANA 2021 Class of Fellows. The Fellows of the AANA (FAANA) designation distinguishes certified registered nurse anesthetists as being the premier anesthesia provider with a high level of skills, training, experience, achievement, and professional standards.
- Patti Hanson, M.S.N., C.N.M., FACNM and Elise Erickson, Ph.D., C.N.M., have been named fellows of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM).
- The Nurse of the Year award goes to current Doctor of Nursing student Shelby Lee Freed in the Advanced Practice category.
- Karen Alles, M.N., R.N., C.P.N., clinical instructor with the Portland UG program, recently received the 2021 CNP Certification Advocate Award from the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB).
- The Black Student Nurses Group Umoja (means unity in Swahili) and the LatinoX Nursing Student Alliance (Lansa) were created last year. Contact Trína Ramírez at ramirez@ohsu.edu for more information about these new groups.

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**GIVE DAY 2021**

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Program expands access to primary care in rural Oregon

By Lee Lewis Huxk

It's a vexing, decades-old problem: how to get well-educated primary care practitioners into rural and frontier areas and underserved urban neighborhoods where the need is great and inequities, lack of access and barriers, are commonplace.

A relatively new program at the School of Nursing is taking aim at the problem. One of the goals of the Regional Expansion of Nurse Practitioner Education at Workforce (RENEW) in Oregon is to recruit nurses from areas of need and educate them as family nurse practitioners and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners with a DNP degree.

The nursing school’s regional campus system provides an ideal model for doing so. Now two years into a four-year, $2.8 million grant funded by the U.S. Health Services & Resources Administration, the school has FNP and PMHNP students at its Portland campus and students in rural areas near the La Grande, Klamath Falls and Ashland campuses.

“Students can choose the regional campus closest to them for hands-on learning,” said Cindy Perry, Ph.D., FNP and project director for the RENEW grant. She explained that the three-year DNP program is a hybrid experience where students get clinical experience with local preceptors, do online coursework, participate in simulation and assessment labs and make one to two trips per term to the Portland campus. Students can also choose to receive their instruction for either degree in person on the Portland campus.

The mental health piece has become increasingly important to address, given the high rates of suicide and depression during the pandemic and the scarcity of practitioners outside of Portland to help people with mental health issues overall.

“It is clear that providing rural mental health care depends on growing local providers,” said Karen Reinherz, Ph.D., R.N., Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Diversity. “This has resulted in a renewed effort and focus on anti-racism work and how we can continue to strengthen the culture within the school, as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

An important milestone in the last year was the creation of safe spaces for students,” said Reinherz, who worked with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to launch two interest groups for underrepresented students. Nine Black student nurses named the first group of its kind at the school, calling it Umoja, which means unity in Swahili. A Latinx student nurses group attracted 15 members to clinic appointments because the area “had a huge need for medical professionals who understand their own cultures,” she said.

“We anticipate more student groups in the future,” said Reinherz. A series of webinars devoted to conversations about anti-racism in nursing education and the nursing profession drew robust interest from faculty and students, strengthening the culture of the School of Nursing community, and they will resume in the fall.

In a quest to improve health equity, the HealthE STEPS program has made progress. HealthE STEPS — Advancing Health Equity through Student Empowerment & Professional Success — has focused on enrolling, retaining, empowering and graduating nursing students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Underrepresented ethnic and racial minority populations, particularly Hispanics and Native Americans, work to improve health equity within their communities through professional nursing practice.

Taking HealthE STEPS toward diversity, equity and inclusion

By Cathy Carroll

During the last year, continuing work toward improving diversity, equity and inclusion has been making strides in a range of ways at the School of Nursing.

The death of George Floyd and the resultant unrest suddenly put a bright spotlight back on diversity equity and inclusion issues, more than ever,” said Karen Reinherz, Ph.D., R.N., Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Diversity. “This has resulted in a renewed effort and focus on anti-racism work and how we can continue to strengthen the culture within the school, as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

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HealthE STEPS focuses on enrolling, retaining, empowering and graduating nursing students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In the last four years, the grant-funded program has awarded $807,949 in scholarships and stipends to 99 undergraduate students and 14 graduate students, according to Joanne Noone, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.E., ANEF, F.A.A.N., who recently retired as OHSU Campus Associate Dean – Ashland. Among the undergraduates, 95 percent were underrepresented minorities and 82 percent were first generation. Many students who go to college, all of them completed the program and 96 percent graduated on time. All of the graduate students identified as belonging to underrepresented minorities and 79 percent were first in their families to go to college. All the graduate students completed the program and 93 percent graduated on time.

HealthE STEPS played a major role in the life path of Elyas Hernandez, who graduated in 2020. Born in Mexico, she was raised in Medford, Ore. and became a mother at age 15. Through her own determination, the support of her family and HealthE STEPS, in 2017 she enrolled at OHSU, Ashland campus and earned a B.S. in Nursing. She went on to enroll in the DNP program at OHSU in Portland, moving there with her 11-year-old son. She completed her doctorate in 2020 and became a certified nurse midwife at La Clinica’s Women’s Health Center in Medford.

Beckie Joarez, Diversity Coordinator and Diana Silsian R.N., B.S.N., Clinical Instructor, both at the La Grande campus, were excited to share the story of Elyas Nason, who graduated in June along with her daughter, Katelyn. Katelyn enrolled in an accelerated high school program so that she could graduate alongside her mother.

The School of Nursing is also prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion through faculty governance. One goal was for the Diversity Advisory Group to be formalized and made a standing committee. That happened in the spring, which allows it to be a part of the process of collaborative partnerships and advisory consultation as it supports the School of Nursing Community across campuses and programs. “This year, membership has increased to about 30 faculty, staff and some external members, representing all programs and campuses,” Beilfleid said.

As part of a Diversity Advisory Group effort to communicate and highlight those who are doing significant work around diversity, equity and inclusion at OHSU, Beilfleid created the “Inspired By a Leader” series of video photo loops playing throughout OHSU. The inaugural loop featured OHSU School of Dentistry’s Rosemarie Hemmings, Ph.D., LSCW, an assistant professor in community dentistry and director of social work. Dr. Hemmings is creating and teaching an innovative inter-professional curriculum related to social determinants of health. As a social worker for three decades, she has seen the psychological impact of socio-economic status on those who get their oral health needs met. Leaders will be highlighted throughout the upcoming year and The School will continue to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority.