New leadership pathway
Announcing an M.S.N. in advanced public health nursing

2016 Alumna of the Year
Linda Mary Vanni, B.S.N. ’83, is honored at Research Day

Traveling nurses
College of Nursing group teaches and learns in Kenya
Dear friends,

Several significant events have occurred recently that will affect the College of Nursing for years to come.

The college is, as always, committed to providing access to exceptional baccalaureate education. We are delighted to announce that in 2015, the first-time pass rate for WSU College of Nursing graduates on the NCLEX exam was 100 percent, leading the nation in pass rates — and exceeding the national average by 18 percent. This is a wonderful affirmation of the good work done here.

We have recently expanded the possible ways a student may earn his or her bachelor of science in nursing degree through two new pathways. Beginning in fall 2016, and for the first time, we will admit a small number of students as freshmen directly to the College of Nursing. This change allows us to offer a four-year path to graduation for a limited number of students who demonstrate exceptional potential. Our first class of freshmen directly to the College of Nursing. This change allows us to offer a four-year path to graduation for a limited number of students who demonstrate exceptional potential. Our first class of freshmen admits has been carefully selected using a holistic admissions review that considers each applicant as an individual and assesses their ability to contribute to the profession. We look at students’ experience and attributes as well as traditional metrics.

We also are welcoming our first eight B.S.N. for Veterans students. This pathway, funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, allows us to recognize military training and experience as we consider applicants for admission, and to focus these students’ programs of study on the special needs of our veteran population.

In a move that sets us apart from all other nursing schools in Michigan, we are pleased to begin offering an M.S.N. in advanced public health nursing, which will prepare graduates to teach, practice, lead and participate in research to benefit the health and well-being of populations and communities. Please read more about this exciting initiative on page 2.

Looking forward, the future will be shaped by two prestigious grants we have been honored to receive. First, WSU is one of only 32 schools in the country to receive the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Future of Nursing Scholars grant. This funding, along with academic support provided by RWJF, will allow our selected scholar to complete a Ph.D. in three years and make substantive contributions to the discipline as a leader and researcher even earlier in his or her career. Second, the college was selected to receive funding from the Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare so that we can name three Jonas Scholars among our doctoral students.

What’s more, we are proud to have been ranked among the top D.N.P. programs in the nation in U.S. News & World Report’s first-ever ranking of doctorate of nursing programs. In addition, we remain among the top M.S.N. programs in the nation in the publication’s best nursing graduate schools guide for 2017.

Amidst all this good news, we are saddened to share that friend and former colleague Dr. Stephanie Myers Schim passed away in February. Stephanie was an exceptional nursing leader, details about which we’ve shared on the next page. She leaves an indelible footprint in the college, and continues to challenge us to innovate and excel. While we mourn her loss, we are very, very grateful for her legacy.

I hope you will enjoy the stories we’re sharing here with you. I look forward to hearing from you as we move into the warm summer months and toward a new school year next fall.

Dean Laurie M. Lauzon Clabo, Ph.D., RN
We are saddened to announce the passing of friend and former colleague Dr. Stephanie Myers Schim, Ph.D., RN, APHN-BC, FAAN, who died peacefully in her sleep on February 19, 2016.

Schim was formerly associate professor and assistant dean for Family, Community and Mental Health Nursing at the college. Her research and academic expertise focused on public health and end-of-life care and the provision of nursing care in the context of culture in community, institutional and transcultural settings.

In the fall of 2014, Schim was involved in a serious accident that left her a quadriplegic. Yet she remained steadfast in her commitment to the college and passionate about nursing. “When I arrived in April 2015, Stephanie’s accident had already occurred,” says Dean Laurie M. Lauzon Clabo. “However, the impact of her leadership here was unmistakable. Her fingerprints are evident on many important college projects. She consulted on the revision of our mission statement, a legacy that will remain in the college and guide our activities for years to come.”

Schim was not only a WSU nursing faculty member but also an alumna. She earned her M.S.N. in 1981 and Ph.D. in 1997 from Wayne State. She joined the College of Nursing faculty in 2000.

“We shared a bond in wanting to do the best we could for the students, faculty and the college,” says Janet Harden, assistant dean of faculty affairs. “Stephanie and I could always have a good discussion, even about our differences.”

A leader on campus, nationally and internationally, Schim’s exceptional scholarship was recognized on many occasions. She was named a 2013 Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and received the 2011 Wayne State University President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. She was the author of numerous academic articles, a member of several professional societies and served on multiple committees.

Speaking of her friend and colleague of over 37 years, Assistant Professor Joan Bickes says, “Stephanie was so very talented in all that she did. She was an inspiration to all and she used her gifts to help others.”

On a personal level, Schim was cherished for her ability to encourage and support her students and colleagues. She was also a big fan of musical theater. She is survived by her son Michael Schim and will be greatly missed.

A memorial service took place in April. The family requests that those wishing to make a donation in her memory do so in support of WSU College of Nursing student scholarships. Contributions may be mailed to: WSU College of Nursing
Attn: Office of Development
Cohn Building, Rm. 131
5557 Cass Ave.
Detroit MI 48202

Make checks payable to Wayne State University College of Nursing and write Stephanie Myers Schim on the memo line.
Wayne State’s graduate school recently approved the new master of science in nursing in advanced public health nursing (APHN), the only one of its kind available in Michigan. APHN-prepared nurses deliver expert, evidence-based care to populations and communities.

“This pathway differs from other public health degrees in that the APHN-prepared nurse can use his or her clinical nursing background in conjunction with graduate-level knowledge and skills to promote health and to prevent disease and disability in a community,” says Coordinator Joan Bickes (above, standing), assistant professor-clinical.

APHN-prepared nurses are leaders who effect public health policy and expand nursing knowledge, often addressing health disparities impacting vulnerable and diverse populations. “Our location in Midtown Detroit and close partnerships with numerous health centers, hospitals, clinics and community centers provide our advanced public health nursing graduate students with a unique opportunity to make an impact on urban health,” says Dean Laurie M. Lauzon Clabo.

While it is critically important for APHN graduates to learn the skills to plan, implement and evaluate programs; to work with big datasets; and to write program grants, APHN graduates also develop an understanding of the complex nature of health disparities in diverse populations and approaches to mitigating their negative impact.

Students may also apply to the School of Medicine Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences to earn a graduate certificate in public health practice. Upon acceptance and with an additional eight credits, students graduate with an M.S.N. in APHN and a graduate certificate in public health practice.

To learn more and apply, visit nursing.wayne.edu and click Programs, then M.S.N.
Interdisciplinary team receives funding

College of Nursing’s Dr. Carmen Giurgescu, assistant professor, and her interdisciplinary team received a $61,000 Institute for Population Studies, Health Assessment, Administration, Services and Economics (INPHAASE) award for their project, “Neighborhood environment, lipidomes and preterm birth in African American women.”

African American women are more likely to experience preterm birth compared with non-Hispanic white women (16 percent and 10 percent, respectively in 2013 in the U.S.). A preterm birth is any that occurs before 37 weeks gestation. The disproportionately high preterm birth rate for African Americans is a persistent health inequity that leads to high infant mortality and morbidity, developmental delays, and chronic illness.

In the United States, approximately $26 billion is spent annually on health care for infants and children who were born prematurely.

Recent attempts to explain the high preterm birth rates in African American women have focused on conditions in disadvantaged neighborhoods, such as deprivation and high vacancy rates, which may increase pregnant women’s stress levels. In general, pregnant African American women are more likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods and to experience psychological stress compared with pregnant non-Hispanic white women. Psychological stress may alter lipidome profiles of pregnant women and increase the risk of preterm birth.

The goal of this 18-month study is to determine the relationships between disadvantaged neighborhoods and psychological stress with alterations in lipidome profiles of pregnant African American women, and to explore if a lipidome profile is associated with preterm birth. The results, if found to be beneficial to public health, could lead to public policy changes.

In this study, Giurgescu and her team will analyze lipidome profiles collected in a sample of 200 pregnant African American women from a previously conducted study by co-PIs Dr. Rosalind Peters and Andrea Cassidy-Bushrow.

Giurgescu has been conducting neighborhood and stress research since 2006. In prior studies, she found that pregnant African American women who report higher vacancy rates and crimes in their neighborhoods also reported more psychological stress.

The research team on this INPHAASE project includes Dr. Andrea Cassidy-Bushrow (co-PI, Henry Ford Health System), Dr. Rosalind Peters (co-investigator, CON), Dr. Dawn Misra (co-investigator, WSU School of Medicine), Dr. Paul Stemmer (co-investigator, WSU Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and Director of the Proteomics Core), Dr. John Reiners (co-investigator, WSU Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and co-director of the Geospatial Determinants of Health Outcomes Consortium) and Dr. Todd Lydic (co-investigator, Michigan State University, Manager of the Collaborative Mass Spectrometry Core).

INPHAASE is an inter-institutional, coordinated effort to bring together and integrate the faculty of WSU and Henry Ford Health System with research expertise.

Core activities are directed toward the problems of disease prevention and management and health promotion in large urban areas, as epitomized by metro Detroit. They include programs to change individual and population behavior related to health status, as well as the behavior of health care systems and providers, or traditional public health.
Alumna of the Year:
Linda Mary Vanni

Representing the CON class of 1983 at Research Day on April 13, from left: Ann Luberski, Donna Pasceretta, Rita Marzec, Linda Mary Vanni and Monica Taubitz.
Linda Mary Vanni (B.S.N. ’83) was presented with the WSU College of Nursing 2016 Alumna of the Year Award on April 13. A self-described Detroit girl, Vanni was born, raised and educated in the city. After graduating from Wayne State, she spent 32 years at the Detroit Medical Center (DMC). A nurse practitioner specializing in pain management, Vanni has practiced for the last five years at St. John Providence in Southfield. She says that her 37-year nursing career has gone by “in a blink.”

Vanni was an EEG technologist before deciding to change careers. She was about 10 years older than the other B.S.N. students, married and owned her own home. She remembers her time at the college fondly, sharing that her first clinical practicum was with Dr. Barbara Pieper, who was teaching in the medical-surgical rotation during her first year of teaching at WSU. Vanni has warm memories of her experience with Pieper.

While at WSU, one experience in particular had a great impact on her nursing career. In 1982, the university began a nurse externship collaboration with the DMC. Vanni applied to the program and was accepted for a paid surgical intensive care externship. It was that mentored summer experience that led her to focus on pain management.

Vanni says she was “appalled at pain management methods at the time,” adding, “Pain management is truly an art in addition to a science ... through experience, nurses learn how to assess patients who are in pain, including those who are suffering from addictive disease.”

Although pain management has changed over the years, Vanni remains passionate about the need to deliver safe and effective treatment to all patients. She says that not only does delivering effective pain management make financial sense but also is the right thing to do.

In 1986, Vanni was one of the first nurses to use a PCA pump for her ICU patients. Other nurses were not enthusiastic about adopting the now common practice to self-administer pain medications. Vanni says, “Nurses probably spend 80 percent of their time doing pain management.” Use of the pump allows patients to have some control in an environment where they have no control, delivering immediate pain relief in smaller doses, more frequently.

Over the years, Vanni has developed expertise in pain management technologies, even utilizing PCA at home for patients at the end of life.

Graduation did not end Vanni’s relationship with WSU but expanded it. She says Wayne State is near and dear to her heart, as she married fellow alumnus Denny Vanni (M.S. Special Education ’83) nine years prior to their graduation from WSU together.

She has remained close friends with five women from her nursing cohort, all of whom also earned a B.S.N. in 1983, and they often get together to socialize and support each other. Rita (Guzick) Marzec, Monica (Bodendistal) Taubitz, Donna (Weiss) Davenport, Ann (Wagner) Luberski, Donna (Morisette) Pascaretta and Vanni each chose a different specialty, however, all were active in the Student Nurses’ Association, something Vanni believes helped them bond.

One of her favorite undergraduate memories is driving to Minneapolis with these girlfriends for an academic conference where she was to present a student paper. While there, they attended a Tigers game in their WSU gear.

As a WSU nursing graduate preceptor and guest lecturer for nursing, pharmacy, radiation therapy, bioengineering and physician’s assistant programs, Vanni continues to build strong relationships and connections to Wayne State. She is a published author, speaker and research consultant on issues related to pain, and has conducted research in collaboration with CON faculty members Dr. April Vallrand and Dr. Margaret Campbell. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the 2014 Clinical Excellence Award from the Midwest Pain Society and the Nightingale Award.

Her advice to current B.S.N. students includes: Keep an open mind, do not be afraid and always be a patient advocate.

“Go back and get your graduate degree because the world is changing,” Vanni says. “When you practice, you need more knowledge. Take on research, try different things, learn something new every day and definitely think about advanced practice.” ▼
The Wayne State University College of Nursing is one of only 32 schools of nursing nationwide to receive a grant to increase the number of nurses holding Ph.D.s.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) Future of Nursing Scholars program will provide financial support, mentoring and leadership development to nurses who commit to earn their Ph.D. in three years. The college was scheduled to select one nursing student to receive this prestigious scholarship in April. The student will begin the Future of Nursing Scholars program this summer and their Ph.D. studies in the fall.

“We are delighted to be selected to participate in the RWJF Future of Nursing Scholars Program,” says Dean Laurie M. Lauzon Clabo. “This prestigious award will allow our selected scholar to complete Ph.D. studies in a timely manner and to make substantive contributions to the discipline as a leader and researcher even earlier in his or her career. We are deeply grateful for the commitment and generosity of the five foundations constituting the Michigan Funders Collaborative and for their recognition of the tradition of excellence in the preparation of nurse researchers in the College of Nursing at Wayne State.”

The number of nurses enrolled in Ph.D. programs is not the only issue addressed by this program. The average age at which nurses get their Ph.D.s in the United States is 46, which is 13 years older than Ph.D. graduates in other fields. This program will provide an incentive for nurses to start Ph.D. programs earlier so that they can have long leadership careers after earning their degrees.

The Future of Nursing Scholars program is a multi-funder initiative. In addition to RWJF, Johnson & Johnson Inc., Independence Blue Cross Foundation, Northwell Health (formerly North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System), Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Sharp HealthCare, Rush University Medical Center and the Michigan Funders Collaborative are supporting the Future of Nursing Scholars grants to schools of nursing this year.

Wayne State’s College of Nursing is receiving its grant from the Michigan Funders Collaborative, which includes Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, Metro Health Foundation, Ethel and James Flinn Foundation, DMC Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

In its landmark nursing report, the Institute of Medicine recommended that the country double the number of nurses with doctorates; doing so will prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health, promote nurse-led science and discovery, and put more educators in place to prepare the next generation of nurses. The Future of Nursing Scholars program is intended to help address that recommendation.

“Since the release of the IOM report, enrollment in doctorate of nursing practice programs has increased an incredible 160 percent from 2010 to 2014,” says Susan Hassmiller, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, co-director of the program and RWJF’s senior adviser for nursing. “However, the increase in Ph.D. enrollment has only been 14.6 percent. At RWJF, we are striving to grow the number of nurses with Ph.D.s who will be prepared to assume leadership positions across all levels.”

Funding the future
Gaining a global perspective

Because of socioeconomic factors, girls in Kenya often do not go to school for days during their menstrual cycle because they don’t have the appropriate resources or funds to purchase pads, taking away from their fundamental right to education. Through the Pad Project, a group of 11 Wayne State University students, professors and alumni recently delivered more than 1,600 reusable menstruation pads to girls in six different schools in Kenya.

While there, the group had the privilege of working at Maseno Mission Hospital, a rural 50-bed facility. The group spent time with a range of patients — including HIV, maternity and pediatrics — in clinics and through home visits out in the community. In addition, they led a physical assessment lecture for local nursing students at Maseno Mission Hospital.

“Wayne State University continues to play a key role in my life even after graduation — including this distinct opportunity to join current students, professors and alumni on a life-changing mission trip to Kenya,” says Damian Tomasik, B.S.N. ‘15. “Being surrounded by the wonderful Kenyan culture while learning about its people through interaction and the work we did has evolved my nursing perspectives. I was able to make a human connection and learn that genuinely compassionate care is not limited to any particular geographical location, culture, race, socioeconomic status, health system or resources. Providing genuine care is free, fundamental to nursing and comes from within.

“Traveling to Kenya allowed for the development of wonderful relationships and lifelong networks with the students, professors and fellow alumni of Wayne State University who joined me on this global adventure,” continues Tomasik. “I learned a great amount from everyone while contributing my own nursing insights and life experiences. Wayne State College of Nursing continues to be pivotal in clinical, educational, and leadership excellence in the improvement of health, both locally and globally.”

Pictured top left, from left: Linnet Anyango (Maseno facilitator), Allison Cornell, Julianna Parks, Brittany Good (partially hidden), Shannon Valls (B.S.N. ’14), Carolyn Frey, Joan Bickes (CON assistant professor), Belinda Fish (CON instructor), Shivani Thakore, Damian Tomasik, Krista Velazquez and Tiwanna Hatcher.
**Accolades**

Professor of Research **Margaret Campbell**, Ph.D., RN, FPCN, was invited to present “Caring Practice: EBP for Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal,” in February as part of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses webinar series. More than 1,900 participants registered for the presentation, during which Campbell discussed an evidence-based approach to evaluate, plan for care, and help in decision-making during terminal weaning and ventilator withdrawal.

**Veronica Decker**’s D.N.P. project was selected as one of the best five clinical interventions at the American Psychosocial Oncology Society this past March for her poster titled, “An Automated and Tailored Intervention to Mitigate Distress in Cancer Patients.”

**Karen Kavanaugh**, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, the Elizabeth Schotanus Professor of Pediatric Nursing, was invited to attend the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement meeting in Dunblane, Scotland, this coming November. Participation in this meeting is by invitation only, and is extended to leaders in the field of death, dying and bereavement. Kavanaugh was selected based on her scholarly and practice contributions in the area of parental bereavement after a newborn death.

The WSU student chapter of the Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners (MICNP) was the recipient of the MICNP Annual President’s Leadership Award (pictured at right). In previous years, this leadership award has been given to an individual member. However, the WSU student group was chosen this year in recognition of its leadership within MICNP as well as for advocating for all nurse practitioners. The WSU student chapter of MICNP was founded in fall 2012 with **Dr. Nancy George** as faculty advisor. The three chapter presidents who have served since then are **Jessica Ciaramella** (D.N.P. ’14), **Amanda Atchoo** (D.N.P. class of 2016) and **Lynda Lauer** (D.N.P. class of 2017). Last year, the group brought in speakers for chapter meetings, donated gift baskets for the MICNP PAC fundraiser and presented a $500 check to PAC during the 2015 Advocacy Day. In past years, the student chapter has hosted bowling fundraisers for PAC and has found creative ways to raise funds to help student members attend the annual conference.

**Class notes**

**Vernice Davis Anthony** (B.S.N. ’70), a recognized local and national expert on community coalition and consensus building, is retired from her role as health officer for the City of Detroit and is CEO and founder of VDA Health Connect. She provides businesses and organizations with strategic solutions to their most pressing health care issues through policy development and community advocacy.

**Margarita Banda Barrientes** (D.N.P. ’15) won first place for her student poster at the Michigan Geriatric Nurse Practitioner Annual Conference in November 2015. The poster was titled, “An Evidence Based Practice Project to Improve Delirium Screening in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit.” The poster was a result of spending more than 300 hours at Henry Ford Hospital working on improving screening for patients.


**In memoriam**

**Martha M. Montgomery** (B.S.N. ’61) died on October 1, 2015. She was an outstanding member of the nursing faculty at Henry Ford Community College for more than 40 years. The family requests donations be made to the Alzheimer’s Association or Wayne State School of Medicine in her name.
Kate Kohn-Parrott was enjoying a successful career in finance at Chrysler when she got the call: The company was putting her in charge of benefits and health care. “I remember saying something like, ‘I thought you liked me,’” Kohn-Parrott recalls with a laugh. “But it was actually a very rewarding move.”

At the time, health care was Chrysler’s biggest cost issue, as it continues to be for many companies. Kohn-Parrott spent years managing and negotiating benefit plans to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

After she retired from Chrysler, she remained dedicated to the challenge of providing quality, cost-effective health care for all. She advised the Michigan state government on policy issues, and in 2012, became president and CEO of the Greater Detroit Area Health Council (GDAHC).

The GDAHC is a nonprofit organization that works with those who “get health care, give health care and pay for health care,” according to Kohn-Parrott. The organization partners with Wayne State’s College of Nursing to serve as the Southeast Regional Center for Michigan’s Area Health Education Center. However, Kohn-Parrott was involved with the College of Nursing long before she joined GDAHC.

In 2007, Kohn-Parrott joined the College of Nursing’s Board of Visitors, and from 2009 to 2012, she served as board chair. As the board’s leader, she committed to establish a scholarship in the college, inspiring other board members to contribute as well. Kohn-Parrott and her husband decided to create the Kathryn and Dennis Parrott Annual Scholarship to honor the dedication of their many family members who are nurses. “I think nurses have a critical role to play in health care,” she says. “They’re very empathetic.”

Kohn-Parrott has always enjoyed mentoring, and feels her involvement with the College of Nursing is a way to mentor and support students. She says she always learns a lot from students and young professionals. But after such a successful career, she has a lot of good advice to give too. “There’s a world of opportunity, but it won’t come looking for you,” Kohn-Parrott says. “You have to go grab it.”
“One reason I liked Wayne State is that a lot of my classes promoted hands-on work within the community — especially at the College of Nursing. It really made me push myself beyond my limits.”

– Roberta Ukavwe ’15 B.S.N.

Let your classmates know what you’ve been doing! Send updates and photos to con@wayne.edu.