Culturally Competent Health Care

With minority populations projected to become the majority in the United States by 2043, a top priority for nursing leaders nationwide is recruiting and educating a diverse nursing workforce trained to provide culturally competent, compassionate health care.

At the 'Wildcat' College of Nursing, we too are committed to educating nursing students from diverse backgrounds. For 2013-2014, 32 percent and 40 percent of our entry and advanced program students identified as Native American, African American, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and men represented approximately 13 percent.

Please know that for our students to realize their dreams of becoming nurses, many need financial assistance. With their gifts of scholarships, our generous donors help ensure that students from all backgrounds can realize their dreams.

To celebrate diversity in nursing, in this issue we are featuring a few of our diverse students, alumni and faculty members who have dedicated their careers to providing culturally competent health care to underserved patient populations.

As always, please contact me with comments, questions or suggestions - jshaver@email.arizona.edu.

Joan L. Shaver, Professor and Dean

A Sincere Thank You from Judith Brown

As many of you know, I will be retiring on Jan. 16. Looking back over the past 10 years, I feel very blessed to have met and connected with so many amazing people—donors, alumni, students, faculty and friends—at the University, in Tucson, across Arizona and throughout the country. These relationships mean everything to me. I have loved raising money in support of nursing, and I truly believe that our students will be the future leaders and providers of outstanding health care for generations to come. I want to express my profound appreciation to each of you. Throughout my tenure, we have collectively advanced the initiatives of the College and enjoyed our ambitious journey together. You have enriched my life greatly and you can be sure that Wildcat Nursing will always be in my heart. Keep in touch - judithb@nursing.arizona.edu.

Judith Brown, Director of Development and Community Affairs, during Homecoming 2014
Michelle Kahn-John, PhD, RN, APRN-BC, assistant professor, is a member of the Diné (Navajo) tribe and grew up in Fort Defiance, Ariz. Raised by parents, family and elders who observed the traditions, practices and beliefs of their culture, Michelle learned the Navajo philosophy of Hózhó, a framework for how one should live life to maintain beauty, balance, peace, wellness, health and harmony.

“There is something in the Hózhó philosophy that has kept our elders really strong and healthy, living into their 80s, 90s and beyond,” said Michelle, whose mother was a medicine woman. “The teachings of Hózhó are elaborate and imbedded in the oral history, in the Diné language. Since many elders only speak Navajo, and our younger generations tend to only speak English, there are limitations in the transfer of cultural knowledge.”

Michelle hopes to bridge this gap in cultural wisdom between the Diné elders and the younger and future generations of the Diné.

With 20 years of experience as a nurse, including 14 as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, Michelle has spent most of her career working with the Indian Health Service on the Navajo Nation in Arizona. In 2005, she led efforts to establish the first inpatient adolescent psychiatric unit for Native Americans on a reservation. Native American cultural wisdom and healing was integrated into the treatment model, and Native American healing interventions were offered alongside Western psychiatric and psychological interventions.

Michelle’s cultural insights and clinical experiences laid the groundwork for her research. Having recently completed her PhD at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, she is seeking new knowledge about Native American resilience—the ability to face and recover from adversity—and protective factors—aspects of life that nurture and sustain, such as family and culture.

“The elements of Hózhó strengthen and empower the individual and the community,” reflected Michelle. “The best part is the principles of Hózhó are relevant to everyone, and the benefits of Hózhó can be experienced by all.” Contact her at mkahnjohn@email.arizona.edu.

Alumnus of the Year Urges Us to ‘Get on the Bus’

During Homecoming, The Rev. Rudy Valenzuela (PhD ’10, MSN ’02), 2014 Wildcat Nurse Alumnus of the Year, spoke about his experience as a family nurse practitioner and Catholic priest working with underserved patient populations along the U.S.-Mexico border. Rudy shared a story about Father James Martin, who was traveling on a Greyhound bus for the first time and could not sleep because the couple behind him was arguing constantly. Father James was about to intervene when he noticed a nurse sitting quietly ahead of the couple and knitting despite the commotion.

Father James reflected on the nurse; someone who takes the bus every day and exudes resilience through her quiet dignity at the end of her work day. There and then he decided he would ‘get on the bus’ with her. After sharing the story about Father James, Rudy urged us all to do the same.

“We need to learn of patience, we need to learn of suffering, we need to learn of hope, and we need to go with them on the bus.”

“We need to ‘get on the bus’ with our patients, and we need to learn from them. We need to learn of patience, we need to learn of suffering, we need to learn of hope, and we need to go with them on the bus. I have tried to do that in my life as a professional nurse and as a priest. I have tried to get on the bus with the poor and with the sick, and I hope that I am successful at it. I hope that I can say the same thing; that I sat next to someone who sat there with dignity, who knew how to suffer, who knew how to pray and above all, who knew how to have hope.” Contact him at rvalenzuela@camillusaz.org.
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care

Palliative care for patients with serious illness improves quality of life, care and patient satisfaction. However, African American elders experience disparities in receipt of palliative care, dissatisfaction with that care and care inconsistent with their wishes.

PhD student Heather Coats, MS, APRN-BC, is investigating psychological-social-spiritual healing for African American elders with serious illness in order to address the critical gaps in knowledge about culturally sensitive palliative care.

"Suffering is much more encompassing than just experiencing physical pain," said Heather. "Incorporating the patient's cultural, spiritual and social beliefs and values into our practice helps us advocate for our patients, provide better care and improve their quality of life by decreasing suffering."

Heather was awarded a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from the NIH National Institute of Nursing Research. This fellowship enables promising predoctoral students to obtain individualized, mentored research training from outstanding faculty sponsors while conducting their dissertation research. Congratulate her at coatsh@email.arizona.edu.

Beyond Cancer: Living with Purpose

On Jan. 24, 2015, we are inviting recently diagnosed and long-term cancer survivors and their families and friends to attend the first annual “Beyond Cancer: Living with Purpose” event, organized through Community Cancer Connections at the College of Nursing. This is a great event opportunity for everyone. Please join us and/or let your friends and acquaintances know about this dynamic gathering.

We will have a series of interactive sessions aimed at enhancing wellbeing, including preparing meals to promote health, doing invigorating movement sessions such as yoga and qi gong, and discovering strategies for promoting short- and long-term vitality. During one-on-one sessions with local community practitioners, participants can experience reiki, massage or Bowenwork.

- **When**: Saturday, January 24, 2015
- **Where**: Abrams Public Health Center, 3950 S. Country Club Rd, Tucson
- **Time**: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (doors open at 8 a.m.)
- **Cost**: Free (optional catered lunch available for $15)
- **Contact**: Michael Principe, principe@email.arizona.edu | 520-626-6151

The Arizona Health Sciences Center 2014 Annual Report

Want to learn more about The Arizona Health Sciences Center? The 2014 Annual Report highlights the impressive scope of academic activities and scientific discoveries from across the health sciences domains, including the Colleges of Nursing, Medicine (Tucson and Phoenix), Pharmacy and Public Health.

To download the report, please visit: [http://ahsc.arizona.edu/report2014](http://ahsc.arizona.edu/report2014)
On Nov. 17, 2014, Pedro N. Oblea, Jr., MS, BSN, RN, a Dr. Arlene M. Putt Scholarship Endowment Fund recipient, and namesake donor Dr. Arlene (Pam) Putt, celebrated his successful Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing dissertation defense, focused on the effects of short-term spousal separation on the behavioral health of military wives.

New Online Courses Available
- Introduction to Acupuncture
- Introduction to Bowenwork

Both courses are two contact hours. For more information, visit http://cne.nursing.arizona.edu.