



FRIENDS,

There are times in our lives when we experience unprecedented events. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly been one of those for me. Never have I seen our health care system so stressed and so close to the breaking point.

Between nurses reaching retirement age and others leaving the profession because of the stresses of COVID, the need for nurses is greater than ever. While the COVID-19 pandemic didn't create a nursing shortage, it certainly amplified the one we were already experiencing.

The College of Nursing plays a vital role in educating the nurses — and the nurse educators — of the future. This is an incredible responsibility, and we are ready to meet the challenge.

This academic year, we have 241 students in our undergraduate program and another 276 in our graduate programs. These students fill me with so much hope for the future of nursing. It takes a special kind of person to see a health care emergency such as the one we are experiencing and sign up to help. Our students are ready to do their part.

Our College also welcomed several new faculty members this year. You will hear more from four of them in this issue as they share what drew them to the classroom. Nurse educators play a vital role in combatting the nursing shortage — after all, we can't educate nurses if we don't have adequate faculty. I am so proud of the amazing job our faculty do every day.

Thank you for your continued support of the college.

Sincerely,
Patricia A. Cowan, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
UAMS College of Nursing Dean



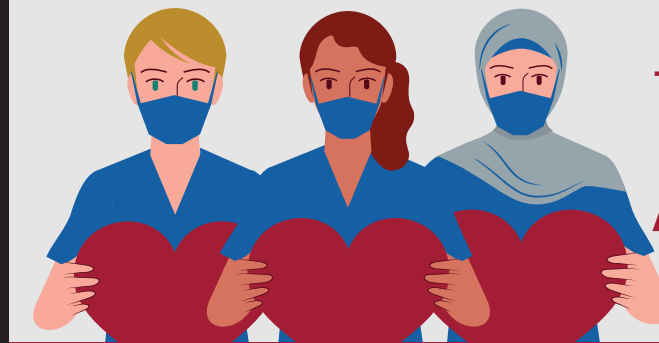
GREETINGS,

These past two years have been difficult ones in health care, and UAMS is no exception. We've been tested and tried as a virulent pandemic sickened many of those in our community, our nation and across the world. These have not been easy times, but through it all, we've rallied together to give our best for the people of Arkansas. I am so proud to be a part of UAMS.

Many times when we think about COVID-19 and health care, we think of the front-line providers. I also think about our students — students who see what is happening and immediately think, "How can I help?" Our students in the College of Nursing are these kind of helpers, and I am very grateful for each one of them. They are the future of health care, and we are in excellent hands.

I would also like to congratulate Dean Cowan and College of Nursing faculty for UAMS' inclusion in *U.S. News and World Report's* list of best Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs. UAMS tied for 43rd out of 694 schools and was the only school in Arkansas in the Top 100. This is a tremendous accomplishment that shows the quality of education offered by our College of Nursing.

Sincerely,
Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA,
Chancellor, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



TEACHING NURSES A LABOR OF LOVE FOR NEW FACULTY

Nursing shortages have become a real issue over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. But just as important is a shortage of qualified nursing instructors. Fewer instructors means fewer students enrolled — and fewer nurses. This year, we welcomed several new faculty to the College of Nursing. We asked them why teaching nurses matters so much, especially now.



"Nursing has provided me with a prosperous career filled with human connection and education at the center. Early in my career, I discovered that teaching and learning bring me joy and had the realization that every moment is

truly a teachable moment. It makes me smile to think I will aid students in the arduous journey from where they are to where they want to be. In doing so, I can pay homage to those instructors who believed in me unconditionally, many of whom I encountered in my time as a student in the College of Nursing."

— Margaret Love, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, ACHPN



"I have always had a passion for mentoring and precepting, but my personal experiences as a nursing student are what led me to enter the realm of academia. I have been inspired by several nursing instructors throughout

my educational journey, starting from RN school through completion of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. I chose academia because I want to give

back to the nursing profession and be an inspiration to those students just as those instructors were for me. The contentment that I feel when a student is successful is confirmation that academia is the place for me."

— Lakendra Ready, DNP, APRN, FNP-C



"I joined the UAMS College of Nursing and academia because it is at the core of who I am, and because it merged my two loves, teaching and nursing. Educating and sharing my knowledge come naturally to me. It has been my

motto throughout life that you can learn anything from anyone if you take the time to listen. What I love about teaching is seeing people get the concepts you are presenting — that 'aha' moment."

— Cesalie Wallace, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, NP-C



"I chose to enter academia because I love being able to merge every aspect of nursing. I love being able to be a part of nursing education, research and clinical practice. Academia also offers the

opportunity to make large-scale changes and provides a platform for that change. There are special moments in our careers where we stop and think, 'This is what it is all about. This is why I do what I do.' My moment came when I started taking students into the hospital. I got to witness these moments in others, and that is one of the greatest joys of my life."

— Colton McCance, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

UAMS NORTHWEST CAMPUS LAUNCHES ACCELERATED NURSING PROGRAM

To meet the changing demands of the health care workforce, the UAMS College of Nursing is launching an accelerated nursing program.

In September, applications opened for a new accelerated bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) program based at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus in Fayetteville. This full-time, 15-month program is open to applicants with a bachelor's or higher degree in any field and requires prerequisite grounding in health sciences such as anatomy, physiology, microbiology and chemistry.

"There's a substantial shortage of nurses in the state right now," said Lauren Haggard-Duff, Ph.D., RN, clinical associate professor in the College of Nursing on the Northwest campus and director of the Accelerated BSN Program. "This program is an essential part of our mission to meet the health care needs of the citizens of Arkansas."

The new program is designed to swiftly transition those outside the profession into nursing. It includes both classroom and practical clinical experiences and will make extensive use of the latest in simulation technology to provide a safe and effective learning space for students as they explore the science of nursing.

"We are currently building a simulation center on the Northwest Regional Campus to supplement clinical experiences," said Patricia Cowan, Ph.D., RN, dean of the UAMS College of Nursing.

Applications for the first class of 24 students will be accepted through March 1. Participants will reside in Northwest Arkansas during the program. The class will begin in May 2022 and graduate in August 2023. Those completing the program will be eligible to apply for licensure as registered nurses.

Byrd, DeClerk Appointed to Full Independent Practice Credentialing Committee



Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson selected College of Nursing faculty Darlene Byrd, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, FAANP (top) and Leonie DeClerk, DNP, APRN, RN, FNP-BC, to serve on the Full Independent Practice Credentialing Committee.



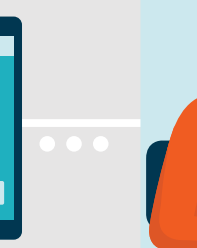
Byrd is a clinical assistant professor, and DeClerk is a clinical associate professor and director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program.

In March 2021, Hutchinson signed Act 412 creating the committee to improve health care access in rural communities. The act allows qualified nurse practitioners with a minimum of 6,240 hours of experience to prescribe medications to patients without a collaborative practice agreement with a physician.

"This will have a significant impact on access to health care," said Byrd. "In the past, nurse practitioners could not go further into rural communities than physicians were willing to go."

Two of the college's most experienced professors, Byrd and DeClerk will work with nurse practitioners and physicians from across the state to develop the rules, policies and procedures for nurse practitioners to apply for full independent practice. The Full Independent Practice credential will be granted to nurse practitioners who meet the qualifications as determined by the committee.

NURSING STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS



Digital health technology purchased with grant funds is helping both undergraduate and graduate College of Nursing students get hands-on experience. The students use the technology to measure vital statistics like weight and blood pressure, and to send and receive that information digitally.

Purchased with funds from the Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Foundation, the equipment also helps simulate patient experiences. Students learn to effectively receive information and then provide responses in adherence with standard-of-care protocols and digital health practice regulations.

"It's another way to deliver high-quality care and expand our reach to patients we wouldn't otherwise be able to see," said Brittany Beasley, Ph.D., RN, CNE, a clinical assistant professor in digital health.

In 2021, when COVID-19 restricted who could be on campus, the college implemented a prenatal telehealth simulation curriculum in which on-campus students and standardized patients participated via Zoom. This built on a virtual post-partum hemorrhage simulation implemented in 2020, which later received positive reviews from students who were

asked to compare the level of knowledge, satisfaction and confidence they gained from the virtual experience as opposed to in-person events.

The prenatal telehealth curriculum covers communication skills and critical thinking ability and allows students to practice providing anticipatory guidance for prenatal patients, such as on the progression of the pregnancy, the importance of getting appropriate tests and laboratory work at specific trimesters, the labor process and making choices regarding labor, birth plans and after-care.

Additionally, in 2021 the college introduced a new elective graduate course, "Introduction to Digital Health." This course introduces graduate nursing students to the principles of implementation and utilization of digital health in the advanced practice nursing roles. The students participate in simulated advanced practice patient visits and develop a business plan to implement digital health into their practice as an advanced practice registered nurse.



Nursing Care Management

In addition to the new Nurse Anesthesia program and the new accelerated BSN program, the College of Nursing is instituting a master's degree in Nursing Case Management, the only program of its kind in the state.

"Case management is patient-centered, population-centered, and focused on improving patient outcomes," said program director Larronda Rainey, DNP, RN. "Nursing case managers bring interdisciplinary teams together to make sure that patients have the most collaborative care possible."

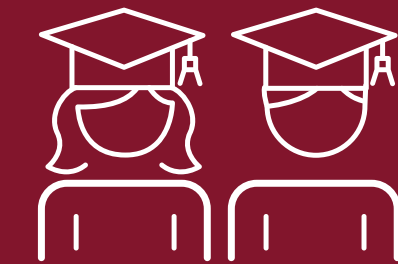
Visit nursing.uams.edu for more information.

FAST FACTS: UAMS COLLEGE OF NURSING



ABOUT THE COLLEGE

- Established in **1953**.
- **Member of the Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence**, dedicated to optimal health and quality of life for older adults and the highest level of commitment to the field of gerontological nursing.



OUR STUDENTS

- **213** graduates in 2020-21 academic year: BSN—104; RN to BSN—13; MNSc—60; BSN to DNP—24; Post-masters DNP—11; Ph.D.—1; Post-Master's Completion —11
- **517** students currently enrolled.
- **5,415** students have earned a BSN degree.
- **2,052** students have earned a MNSc degree.
- **77** students have earned their Ph.D. in nursing.
- **107** students have earned their DNP degree.
- **89.6%** NCLEX-RN first-time pass rate; National pass rate — 88.1%
- **100%**: cumulative Nurse Practitioner Certification pass rate.



OUR FACULTY

109 faculty.

Faculty members practice in pediatrics, primary care, gerontology and psychiatric and mental health.

Eight extramurally funded grants

Research focus areas: cardiovascular, cancer, gerontology and mental health and addiction



COST OF EDUCATION

The average yearly tuition for Arkansas residents, assuming full-time study, was:

BSN program: \$9,270.

MNSc program: \$10,148.

DNP program: \$11,485.

CRNA program (Nurse Anesthesia): \$22,002.



SCHOLARSHIPS:

2020–2021

- **139** students received scholarships.
- **153** scholarships awarded.
- **\$349,900:** Total amount of scholarships awarded

2021–2022

- **83** students received scholarships.
- **98** scholarships awarded.
- **\$312,850:** Total amount of scholarships awarded



Michelle Gonzalez, Ph.D., CRNA,

knows that the key to workplace diversity is

opportunity. For Gonzalez, the director of the new Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesia program, the best way to ensure that more persons of color and members of underserved populations join the profession isn't just to be a good role model. Instead, it requires the proverbial village and a commitment of time, resources and mentorship to these individuals who have an interest in nurse anesthesia.

Gonzalez, who was recently inducted into the inaugural class of Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), came to nurse anesthesiology from a military background.

"The military is one way that doors have been opened for people

who don't otherwise have access to resources to prepare them for careers in health care," she said.

Gonzalez has committed her time and expertise to one particular organization, the Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program (diversitycrna.org), which has helped hundreds of students matriculate into CRNA programs all over the country.

This organization helps to prepare candidates for the rigors of nurse anesthesia education with mock interviews, standardized-test preparation and boot camps on health care concepts. Gonzales, who sits on the organization's board, notes that students who pass through the program have greater emotional intelligence and sharper academic focus than most. So far, at least 11 of Gonzalez's students at UAMS passed through this program.

"The goal is to change the face of opportunity for education," she said, and there is no doubt that, in this and in other endeavors, she is succeeding.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).
- Accelerated BSN programs: RN to BSN and RN to BSN/MNSc.
- Advanced nursing practice degree programs at the master's and doctoral levels.
- The only College of Nursing in Arkansas to offer these nurse practitioner specialty programs in acute care pediatrics nurse practitioner, primary care pediatric nurse practitioner and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.
- The only College of Nursing in Arkansas to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesia.
- The only College of Nursing in Arkansas to offer a research doctoral program (Ph.D. in Nursing Science).



College of Nursing

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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

NURSING



GIVING

Your help is what makes it possible for us to achieve our goals, especially at a time when both professional nurses and nursing students are on the front lines of a global epidemic.

DEAN'S CIRCLE

The Dean's Circle plays a vital role. Funding has provided several benefits over the years, including educational innovations, new programs, scholarships, and research and pilot programs in mental health, addiction, chronic disease, oncology and gerontology — all areas of greatest need in Arkansas.

Membership Levels

- CON Dean's Circle Benefactor—\$5,000
- CON Dean's Circle Corporate—\$2,500
- CON Dean's Circle Individual/Household—\$1,000
- CON Dean's Circle Recent Alumni—\$500

SCHOLARSHIPS

For many students, this year has proven especially challenging. Many have faced hardships as economic factors have affected their income and limited their opportunities for part-time employment. They depend on financial assistance to continue their studies. We can ease that burden, as funding allows, by offering donor-supported scholarship assistance.

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

One of the central missions of the College of Nursing is service to the community, and several CON faculty have taken this mission to heart, working with local and regional partners to expand health care access throughout the state. For example, **Leonie DeClerk** and **Teresa Whited** both support the Arkansas Special Olympics, performing physical examinations for adult and pediatric athletes before competition. Other faculty have partnered with local church groups to provide health care to homeless and housing-insecure populations. **Brittany Beasley** oversees the outreach program at Canvas Community Church in Little Rock, which serves the city's homeless population; as part of this program, **Rochelle McFerguson** and **Stephanie Trotter** oversee a Women's Night and a Mental Health night, while **Pamela de Gravelles** helps to run the weekly "Dinner and a Movie Night." **Leslie McCormack** and **Laura Mayfield** run the "Motherhood Together" program, which teaches expectant mothers the basics of maternal health care. These and other programs serve a double function, allowing nursing students multiple interprofessional ways to interact with underserved, special-needs and minority populations in the region.

nursing.uams.edu

To support the College of Nursing, you can donate directly in any amount at giving.uams.edu



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