February was Black History Month; March is Women’s History Month. Both of these are important to the activities we undertake here in the College of Nursing. In addition, the topic of diversity and inclusion has received much attention in the dialogue here at MUSC and the larger community. So I would like to share some thoughts on this topic with you this month.

First, I want to say that I am pleased with the progress the CON has made on this issue over the recent years. Second, I want to remind us all that this is a journey and not a destination. Thus, as with all of our quality improvement initiatives, promoting diversity and inclusion remains an ongoing priority.

At its core I believe that diversity is about respect for all others, fairness in all actions and transactions, and transparency in our values, processes and outcomes. As you know we have held workshops in the CON that examined cultural competencies in our courses and curriculum, analyzed the implications of unconscious bias, and explored our unexplored blind spots - all important activities for sure and hopefully there will be more to come.

Central to our work on this issue is the requirement that the ethos of our College continue to embrace open and honest conversation. Research has shown that in organizations where all people can voice their concerns freely they have increased retention and stronger performance. These organizations have some things in common.

• They will not acknowledge or respond to anonymous feedback because it has been found to reinforce people’s fears, set off witch hunts, and most importantly, block the ability to really address the problem.
• Leaders model free expression not only within their own group but also with their higher-ups.
• Formal processes for regular feedback, follow up and resource allocation to address specific issues are set in place and utilized.

So in the days ahead I will continue to work on doing all I can to promote diversity and inclusion. I will ask for your ideas, be transparent in my communications, and try to set an example by both listening to you and advocating for you. Bottom line is that I want you to feel that it is both safe and worthwhile to contribute to making our College better, no matter who you are or where you are in the organization. My lines are open....Gail

Diversity is a diverse issue
By Dean Gail Stuart, PhD, RN, FAAN
WSI-ARROWS group to host coffee hour Mar. 21

The MUSC Women Scholars Initiative (WSI) and COM’s Center for ARROWS (Advancement, Recruitment, and Retention of Women in Science) in conjunction with the Diversity and Ethnic Relations Committee (DERC) will host a drop-in networking coffee hour featuring MUSC President David Cole, MD. The event will take place from 8:30-9:30 a.m. March 21, in the College of Health Profession’s atrium. Coffee, tea, muffins and bagels will be served and all faculty are welcome to attend.

Cristina Lopez, PhD, founder and chair of the DERC, formed the group in 2014 to retain and promote underrepresented female faculty through research-related resources, collaborations, social support, visibility, and professional development.

The coffee hour series aims to promote diversity and inclusion by giving MUSC faculty members an opportunity to get to know each other in an informal setting.

CON leads SC in NIH nursing research funding

The MUSC College of Nursing continues to lead the state in the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) research funding list by ranking 15th out of the 66 U.S. nursing schools ranked. In addition to the College of Nursing being the highest ranked institution in S.C., the college also ranked third in the southeast, according to annual figures posted by the NIH. For the past three years, the college’s research funding has placed in the top 20 in the nation among nursing schools.

Rankings are established by the amount of research dollars awarded by the NIH to each school of nursing. Last year, MUSC College of Nursing research faculty attracted over $3 million in NIH grants for research projects. These funds enable CON’s faculty scientists to continue their innovative efforts including smart phone interventions for diabetics, leg ulcers prevention, enhancing kidney donation using video, and health literacy and disease management in African-Americans. This type of funding is considered a strong indicator of an institution’s strength in research, as well as nursing science.

Psych/mental health track added to DNP

A Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) track has been added to the DNP program. The PMHNP provides lifespan primary mental health care for individuals, families and populations who are at risk and/or have a behavioral health disorder or problem. The need for nurse practitioners in mental health care settings is large and will continue to increase as the physician shortage worsens, and mental health care becomes more accessible through the Affordable Care Act. In South Carolina alone, there are 3,205 certified nurse practitioners and only 54 (less than 2 percent) practice as mental health care providers. This new DNP track will help address this need and assist in improving life quality and outcomes for South Carolinians by increasing the number of PMHNPs in SC and beyond. To read more click here.
### MARCH

**THU-FRI 7-8**  
Medical Center Interview Blitz for ABSN Class of 2016  
7 p.m. | Charleston Country Club

**WED 9**  
Regalia Day  
9 a.m.- 4 p.m. | Colbert Education Bldg.

**WED-FRI 9-11**  
PhD Learning Intensives

**FRI 11**  
Homecoming Event  
Dean’s Welcome Reception & Alumni Awards  
7 p.m. | Charleston Country Club

**SAT 12**  
Homecoming Event | Global to Local  
9:30 a.m. | College of Nursing

**SAT 12**  
Homecoming Event | BBQ Under the Stars  
6:30 p.m. | Charleston Maritime Center

**MON-FRI 14-18**  
Spring Break

For more listings of events & meetings go to CON’s events calendar  
[http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/nursing/administration/studentservices/events_calendar.htm](http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/nursing/administration/studentservices/events_calendar.htm)

### APRIL

**THU-FRI 7-8**  
MUSC Board of Trustees Meeting  
Colcock Hall

**WED 16**  
Staff Meeting  
9 a.m. | CON 202

**MON 21**  
Faculty Assembly  
1 - 4 p.m. | CON 202

---

**Epilepsy Awareness**

**PURPLE DAY**  
**EPILEPSY AWARENESS DAY**  
**MARCH 26**

Epilepsy Awareness Day is observed annually on March 26. The day has become known as “Purple Day” as people are encouraged to wear the color to increase awareness of Epilepsy.

---

**STILL AMONG THE BEST**

ONLINE GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS BY U.S. News & World Report
Volunteer for a POD exercise
DHEC Lowcountry Region is participating in a statewide exercise on April 15. The organization will be testing their ability to staff a Point of Dispensing (POD) site in the event of a biological or chemical event that would activate the Strategic National Stockpile. A POD site is a federally instituted best practice model designed to provide medications, vaccines, or medical supplies to a large community of healthy people during a health emergency.

While DHEC has staff to run the POD, they are in need of volunteers to act as patients coming through to receive the medications (Skittles-yum!). Specific scenarios have been written for the volunteers so that the staff can practice their triage.

The locations are Whale Branch Elementary School in Beaufort in the morning and Ashley Ridge High School in Summerville in the afternoon.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please send your name to Mardi Long at longm@musc.edu by March 4.

HRSA’s Nurse Faculty Virtual Job Fair
>> Wednesday, March 23, 2016 | 6:45 – 10 p.m. EST
Are you looking for a full time faculty position? Join HRSA’s Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) Virtual Job Fair to connect and network with accredited schools of nursing promoting open full-time faculty positions. You can participate from a location that is convenient for you, including your home.

The Virtual Job Fair offers real-time interaction with representatives from accredited schools of nursing. During the fair, you will learn about job openings and benefits offered by the various institutions.

Don’t miss this unique opportunity to network with schools of nursing nationwide and learn about full-time faculty positions with primary teaching responsibilities. Participation is free. To participate you must:
- Be a current NFLP loan recipient.
- Have access to a computer, smart phone or other mobile technology with access to the Internet, and a phone line.
- Be seeking a full-time nurse faculty position.

Sign up to receive an alert when registration is open. For more information, visit Nursing and Public Health Resources or email NFLP_General@hrsa.gov.

Scholarship programs seek applicants
Coastal Community Foundation
The Faith Jefferson Hohloch Nursing Scholarship is available to students who have been accepted or enrolled in a two-year or four-year U.S. based institution of higher education. Applications will be accepted until April 1.

The Thaddeus John Bell Scholarship was created with Coastal Community Foundation of S.C. in 2006 to honor the decades of medical services and civic contributions provided by Dr. Bell to the Charleston community. The Endowment will provide a total of $10,000 in awards. The endowment hopes to receive applications from students who plan to serve underprivileged S.C. citizens or geographic areas of S.C. that are underserved by health care professionals. Applications will be accepted until April 1.

Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP)
HPSP will award scholarships to students receiving education or training in a direct or indirect health care services discipline (Title 38 and Hybrid Title 38 Occupations). Awards will be offered on a competitive basis and are exempt from Federal taxation. In exchange for the award, program participants will agree to a service obligation in a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility.

The HPSP anticipates offering scholarships in the following nursing career programs: BSN, family nurse practitioners and mental health nurse practitioners. The HPSP will accept applications via USAJobs until May 4. Applicants do not need to work at the VA when they apply but all awarded must agree to work for the VA upon graduation.

For more information and eligibility requirements visit, http://www.vacareers.va.gov/why-choose-va/education-support.asp

Student news
Crystal Graham, PhD student, has been accepted into the National League for Nursing’s Leadership Development Program for Simulation Educators. Graham is among 20 international educators selected to study for a year with leaders in simulation and technology. Graham’s dissertation chair is Teresa Atz, PhD.

Of note...
- The SNA is having a sweatshirt sale. Sweatshirts are $35 and come in six colors. Easy ordering at https://www.booster.com/sna-sweatshirts. Hurry...the last day to order is March 23.
- DEADLINE APPROACHING!
  Application deadline for the CON’s online DNP and RN to BSN programs is March 15. Apply now by visiting www.musc.edu/nursing.
Funded research projects

**PI:** Michelle Nichols, PhD, RN  
**SPONSOR:** Delaware-CTR ACEL/ACE Awards  
**PROJECT PERIOD:** 02/01/16-01/31/17  
**FUND AMOUNT:** $19,400

**GOAL:** To train scholars to conduct research that engages the community in the research experience. This initial research experience of the ACE award should lead to larger, externally-funded research and publications and support individuals to become independent community-engaged researchers.

**TITLE:** Establishing a Baseline Health Assessment in Economically Distressed Communities of North Charleston, SC

**PI:** Mathew J. Gregoski, PhD and David P. Turner, PhD (Pathology and Laboratory Medicine)  
**SPONSOR:** NIH/NIA

**TITLE:** The Examination of Tailored Local and mHealth Wellness Interventions on the Reduction of Behavioral Lifestyle Factors Related to Chronic Disease among Mid-Life Adults

**GOAL:** To test whether lifestyle interventions (i.e., increased exercise and healthier eating) can favorably alter biological pathways associated with advanced glycation end-products (AGE) metabolites in a sample of adults aged between 50 and 65.

**PI:** Gigi Smith, PhD, APRN  
**SPONSOR:** Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

**TITLE:** Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program

**GOAL:** To fund students enrolled in the MSN and DNP programs in order to increase the supply of primary care advanced practice nurses who practice in rural and health professional shortage areas and/or medically underserved areas in SC and the nation in three areas: AGNP, FNP, and PNP.

**PI:** Kenneth Ruggiero, PhD  
**SPONSOR:** NIH/NIMH

**TITLE:** Bounce Back Now: A Low-Cost Intervention to Facilitate Post-Disaster Recovery

**GOAL:** To support research training and related activities of Dr. Heidi Resnick (Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences) in order to facilitate her re-entry into biomedical and behavioral research following serious illness.

**PI:** Mathew J. Gregoski, PhD and David P. Turner, PhD (Pathology and Laboratory Medicine)  
**SPONSOR:** NIH/NIA

**TITLE:** The Examination of Tailored Local and mHealth Wellness Interventions on the Reduction of Behavioral Lifestyle Factors Related to Chronic Disease among Mid-Life Adults

**GOAL:** To re-enter into biomedical and behavioral research following serious illness.

**PI:** Ron Acierno, PhD  
**SPONSOR:** Department of Defense

**TITLE:** Exposure Therapy "Workout Buddies": A Pilot Study of Peer Support for in Vivo Exposure Component of PTSD Treatment Among Those at Risk for Dropping Out

**GOAL:** To evaluate if receiving social support during in vivo exposure therapy homework from veterans who have successfully competed PE (i.e., the therapeutic equivalent of an exposure therapy ‘workout buddy’) is effective in reversing dropout and improving PTSD outcomes.

**Publications & presentations**

> **PUBLICATIONS**


> **PRESENTATIONS**

The South Carolina General Assembly has reconvened and APRN scope of practice is being discussed once again this year. There are some major updates to be aware of after the initial discussion in the previous legislative session including:

- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Opinion on House Bill 3078 (APRN sponsored bill that increases access and removes practice barriers) and 3508 (physician-sponsored bill that opposes APRN bill and brings more regulation)
  - FTC urged the SC legislature to “avoid restriction on APRN practice that are not narrowly tailored to address well founded patient safety concerns”
  - FTC states that 3078 streamlines regulation and fulfills SC APRNs practicing to the full scope of their education and training as advised by the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) and notes that under 3078 APRNs will remain subject to regulatory oversight but without formal physician oversight that is found in the current law
  - There is no reason to have these current barriers based upon safety measures. Removing them allows for “improved access to care, cost containment and expanding innovation in health care delivery”

- On APRN lobby day, Jan. 26 the APRN bill was voted out with amendments in the 3M subcommittee. They did not accept the ninth draft of the bill. Below is a synopsis of the proposed amendments per the SC Nurses Association:
  - Schedule 2 controlled substances for ONLY those meds that were re-classified into C2 in Oct 2015 (hydrocodone meds)
  - Ratio of APRNs to MDs are 4FTE NPs to One MD
  - Mileage extends to entire state and 60 miles outside of border of SC
  - Establishes a Board of Nursing and Board of Medicine Committee to approve APRNs who want to practice including approving a change in employment or obtaining new employment, ensuring there is supervision of the APRN by the physician, and a match between APRN and physicians (this means pediatricians could only supervise PNP for example), and approves APRN practice agreements with physicians.
  - Kept physician supervision of APRNs

- It is unsure when the 3M committee will hear this bill again

- Continue to call the members of the 3M committee and ask them to support 3078 and remove all barriers. Please remember to call Representative Horne and thank her for her continued support of APRNs. Contact information for the 3M committee is available at: http://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/house3M.php

- Per the South Carolina Nurses Association, the rationale for removing the Joint Committee and Collaborative Practice is:
  - FTC advises that this adds additional restrictions of SOP and impediments to access
  - Waiting for Joint committee for practice approval could result in a delay in getting employment or changing employment, resulting in a delay or NO job resulting in NP’s inability to earn an income, obtaining health insurance;
  - Waiting for Joint committee for approval could result in a delay in getting on board with a practice and providing care and increasing access to care.
  - This joint committee is one step to being regulated by Board of Medicine, which FTC states is a conflict of interest
  - APRNs have never had to get joint approval for a practice or employment.
  - Less than .001 of APRNs are disciplined annually since 1992 to 2014

The CON’s Office of Practice will continue to write updates to this legislation in e-Connections as they become available. The full FTC opinion can be found here.

Click on this interactive nurse practitioner scope of practice laws guide to see where SC stands in comparison to other states as you contact your legislators.
Tyra Dingle, research grant assistant, has been elected to serve on CON’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Elaine Amella, PhD, RN, professor, has been invited by the Ministry of Health Singapore to serve on the Evaluation Panel under National Innovation Challenge on Active and Confident Aging to review grants from February until August 2016.

Congratulations to Whitney Smith, MSN, APRN, instructor and DNP student, on her selection into the DNP Jonas Nurse Leader Scholar Program.

A 2015 Josiah Macy Jr, Foundation publication, Enhancing Health Professions Education through Technology: Building a Continuously Learning Health System, is available for download. The conference was co-chaired by Dean Gail Stuart, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Marc Triola, MD, FACP. Proceedings were recorded in this report.

The VA Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP) is pleased to announce two new clinical faculty members to its staff. Fharen Grant, MSN, RN and Kirstin Pennington, MSN, RN.

Grant has been a nurse at the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC for the last 7 years. She earned a BSN from South Carolina State University and a master’s degree in nursing leadership/management from Walden University. In addition, she holds a medical-surgical nursing certification. Grant is currently pursing an additional master’s degree focused in clinical nurse leadership and hopes to graduate in June 2016.

Pennington earned a bachelor’s degree in health administration from Winthrop University and practiced in the health-care business sector before returning to Excelsior College to earn her MSN. For the past six years, she has been a certified medical/surgical nurse. During her graduate studies, she assisted with preceptor education in the Post Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program.

A satisfied customer

Partners in HealthCare (PHC) is a nurse managed clinic in Mt. Pleasant that is a collaborative effort between East Cooper Community Outreach and the MUSC’s College of Nursing and the Dept. of Family Medicine.

CON faculty members Beth Jensen, DNP, APRN, Charlene Pruitt, MSN, APRN, and Whitney Smith, MSN, APRN, are nurse practitioners who provide patient care at the PHC clinic. They have a caseload of 116 unique patients who have been diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions.

The clinical practice provides a clinical laboratory for interprofessional care that includes students from the colleges of nursing, health professions, pharmacy, and medicine. In addition, the practice provides telehealth for pharmacy consultation and a health coaching model for patient engagement in self management of chronic conditions.

Below is a letter from a grateful patient praising Jensen and Emma Troiani, CON student assistant. It has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Jack Little
Executive Director
East Cooper Community Outreach
1145 6 Mile Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466

Dear Mr. Little,

I had an appointment with Beth Jensen, NP, at the Partners in Healthcare clinic on Feb. 3. I am writing to express my gratitude for having the opportunity to have my healthcare needs addressed in such a caring, professional, and thorough way. Beth is amazing! In fact, everyone on the staff I met that night—Catherine Triplett, who was working at the front desk, and Emma Troiano, a nursing student—was wonderful! Further, I would not have been able to receive the medical care I need, which will reduce my risk of having a heart attack and/or kidney failure due to high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

As someone who has worked in healthcare for 18 years, I understand the importance of diet and exercise in reducing the risk of chronic disease. Despite regular, vigorous physical activity and a healthful diet, I have not been able to control my cholesterol or blood pressure. Without this clinic and a practitioner who listens as Beth does, I was on the path towards a heart attack and/or chronic kidney disease. Now, I am able to control both my hypertension and hypercholesterolemia, thus thwarting off more intense health problems or even death, because this clinic exists and you have hired a component provider who communicates well with me, as a patient, feel such a relief that my healthcare concerns are being addressed.