

# Nursing Alumni News



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### USI Nursing Alumni Newsletter

**College of Nursing and Health Professions**

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## Message from the Nursing Alumni Society



I wanted to introduce myself as the new President of the USI Nursing Alumni Society. I am honored to say that I have obtained two nursing degrees from USI. I completed the RN to BSN program in 2007 and obtained my MSN in Nursing Education in 2010. I will be starting on my third nursing degree from USI in the fall as I embark on my DNP degree.

Recently, had the pleasure of attending USI's 18th Annual Research and Healthcare Issues Conference. Nurses today display such a high degree of honesty, loyalty and integrity. Our ability to promote a culture of innovation is astounding and we are truly a major contributor to organizational improvement.

That being said, we want to hear from you, our nursing alumni, about your professional endeavors. Share with us your promotions, publications, advanced degrees, etc. We know our graduates are producing exceptional accomplishments, however, we do not always hear about these activities. We want to celebrate you! Please stay in contact with us and send this information to [mtscheller@usi.edu](mailto:mtscheller@usi.edu).

Outgoing President Dr. Jennifer Titzer and I want to extend an invitation to participate in our events and become involved in the endeavors of the USI Nursing Alumni Society. Our annual Nursing Alumni Dinner will be on Tuesday, October 21, 2014, so mark your calendars. More information about this fun event will be coming at a later date. I look forward to serving as your new president.

Best regards,

Dawn Worman



**CNHP Dean Ann White** and two others from USI have leadership roles with the Indiana Center for Nursing (ICN). The new president is **Cherona Hajewski**, vice president of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at Deaconess Hospital,

Inc., in Evansville. She is currently a Doctor of Nursing Practice student at USI. President-elect is Dr. Ann White. She has served on the board for the ICN for two years. USI alum **Kimberly J. Harper** has been the executive director for the ICN since its inception in 2011. She was recently named president of the board of directors for the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers.

# Berry named 2013 Distinguished Nursing Alumna



Jennifer Berry, adult health nurse practitioner with Community Hospital Oncology Physicians in Indianapolis, is the 2013 recipient of the USI Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award.

Berry completed associate and bachelor's degrees in nursing at USI and a Master of Science in Nursing degree at Indiana University, Indianapolis. She has worked as an adult health nurse practitioner with an oncology focus since 2008.

Berry began work as a registered nurse at Deaconess Hospital before joining the nursing staff at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis as a graduate student.

Her first position as an advanced practice nurse was at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago in 2008. There she was the manager of stem cell transplantation and worked closely with hematology patients, with an emphasis on multiple myeloma and lymphoma.

In her current role as an oncology nurse practitioner with the Community Health Network, she manages various aspects of cancer patients' care, including intravenous and oral chemotherapy, radiation therapy, long-term effects of therapy, and all other medical management issues associated with oncology treatment in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

In 2010, Berry was named Nurse of the Year by the Chicago chapter of the Leukemia Research Foundation, which presents the award to recognize the important contributions of hematology-oncology nurses to the care of patients with leukemia, lymphoma, and myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS).

The USI Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award recognizes a graduate who has made outstanding achievements in a career or public service. The award was presented at the USI Nursing Alumni Society's annual dinner in October.

**Save  
the Date!**

Next Nursing  
Alumni Society  
Dinner  
will be  
**Tuesday,  
October 21,  
2014**



*Dr. Jennifer Titzer, Jennifer Berry, Dr. Gina Schaar, and Gail Hoehn during the 2013 Nursing Alumni Society annual dinner.*

## Accreditation Update

All three USI nursing programs are had their accreditation site visits on February 26, 27, 28, 2014.

The visit went exceptionally well. We will update you on the status when we are given final word.

## Faculty News



**Dr. Mellisa Hall** chairs the graduate nursing program.



**Dr. Connie Swenty** has been named undergraduate nursing program chair. **Dr. Jeri Burger** is now chair of the RN to BSN program. **Dr. Roberta Hoebeke** has been promoted to full professor.



**Dr. Mayola Rowser**, associate professor of nursing, has a new role at USI as interim director of Graduate Studies. She continues to be involved with the USI Community Health Clinics at Glenwood, Lodge and Cedar Hall schools.



## Nurse preceptor receives USI volunteer award



**Kyle Ellis**, a nursing preceptor at St. Mary's Medical Center, Evansville, was named USI's "Mentor of the Year" at the annual volunteer recognition banquet Aug. 28.

This marks the first time this award has been presented university-wide, and it is given to a USI faculty, staff, alumni, or community member who has mentored a USI student in his or her overall academic field.

Ellis has been a dedicated USI nursing preceptor for the past 15 years. Each time she agrees to mentor, she commits to 192 hours of teaching and coaching per student, according to Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions.

In addition to being a preceptor for the nursing internship course, Ellis also works with other students in the nursing program during their clinical experience at St. Mary's. She is described as a very positive person who is dedicated to the nursing profession and to mentoring future nurses.

## Thank you to all USI nursing volunteers!

Nurses who serve in the Dedicated Education Units (DEU) were honored at the fall recognition dinner sponsored by Volunteer USI.

Out of the over 112,148 hours donated to the College of Nursing and Health Professions during the past year, Nursing Clinical Teaching Associates logged an estimated 72,578 hours.



*Dr. Ann White and Susan Seibert greet nursing program volunteers from Deaconess Hospital who attended the Volunteer USI dinner on Aug. 28, 2013. From left, Susan Seibert, USI DEU liaison; Libby Ivy; Angie Stroud, 5100 unit manager; Shana Evans; Julie Staalenburg; Lena Ruminer; and Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions.*

## December grads get jump on job search

Recently, area healthcare providers gave the USI College of Nursing and Health Professions (CNHP) some valuable feedback, explaining their need to have more nurses enter the workforce. As a response, the College piloted an "early graduation" program this past summer to prepare 11 BSN students for December 2013 graduation. Here are some comments from two of the students:

**Mark Thomas Ritter:** *"I did the December graduation so I could start my career as soon as possible. We have an excellent program, and it's the number one choice for hospitals hiring new grads. The time and energy*

*that goes into completing the program can really test your commitment."*

**Meagan Cobb:** *"I signed up for this because my first degree was in psychology, so that means I've been in school for almost seven years ... I'm ready to get out there and start working in the field of nursing. I decided to do a local internship at a hospital while doing the summer program for early graduation. So the most challenging aspect for me was the amount of hours I was at the hospital. But I don't regret it because I learned so much. On a side note, this summer while rounding with my manager for the management class,*

*I was able to sit front row with her as Deaconess got the phone call that they were awarded magnet status. This experience was once in a lifetime. My manager and I ended up in the newspaper that day. This is something I would never had a chance to do if I completed the regular track for graduation."*

"This pilot program was successful, so we are going to continue with a new set of students this summer," said Dr. Ann White, dean of the CNHP. "We are pleased to work with area providers to help meet the needs of the nursing workforce."

# Faculty Awards & Achievements

**Dr. Jennifer Titzer**, assistant professor of nursing, was selected as the 2013-14 recipient of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Excellence in Nursing Practice Award.

This prestigious competitive award is granted for an outstanding capstone project in a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program. She received this award at the ACCN 2014 Doctoral Education Conference Jan. 30 in Naples, FL.

Dr. Titzer was also recently accepted as a participant in the Nurse Faculty Leadership Academy (NFLA). The NFLA has been developed by Sigma Theta Tau International in partnership with the Elsevier Foundation to enhance the personal leadership development of new nurse faculty in order to promote faculty retention and cultivate high performing, supportive work environments.

During the NFLA launch in Indianapolis on March 24, 2014, Dr. Titzer and other nurse faculty gathered for the first of two leadership development workshops scheduled during the 18-month academy. Also participating is **Dr. Jeni Embree**, a 2011 USI DNP grad, now teaching at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis.

The NFLA pairs aspiring full-time, non-tenured faculty leaders, called scholars, with experienced leadership mentors, who are then supported by NFLA faculty members.

Presentations during the four-day workshop included discussion of the Kouzes and Posner leadership model, ethics of trustworthy leadership, and changing expectations of the faculty role.



*Caption: Dr. Jennifer Titzer (center), with NFLA mentors Dr. Rose Sherman of Florida Atlantic University, and Dr. Barb Friesth of Indiana University.*



**Susan Seibert**, clinical assistant professor in Nursing, has been selected for a CNHP Faculty Development Award for 2013-14. Her project title is "Indiana DEUs." This

award is chosen by the Faculty Affairs Committee. The study was expanded to Midwestern DEUs, including Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky.

Seibert also has had her first manuscript published. The title of her article, "Safety consciousness: Assignments that expand focus beyond the bedside" can be found in the February 2014 issue of *Nurse Education Today*, pp.233-236.

\* \* \*



**Dr. Roberta Hoebeke**, professor of Nursing, received a Leadership Award from HOLA, a non-profit promoting cultural diversity and inclusion of Latinos in the Evansville

community. In addition to her fulltime teaching duties, Dr. Hoebeke practices part-time as a family nurse practitioner in Evansville.

Dr. Hoebeke and her students have partnered with HOLA and the Juan Diego Center for the past four years to promote community health by writing grants and helping with health screenings and physical examinations during the health fairs at Nativity Church.

\* \* \*



**Dr. Gina Schaar**, assistant professor of nursing, was selected for the 2013 Melissa Faye and John M. Lawrence Baccalaureate Nursing Faculty Teaching

Award. The award, which Dr. Schaar also received in 2009, is selected by the senior class and given to a member of the undergraduate faculty who demonstrates a commitment to nursing education.

The award is named in honor of John Lawrence '73, a generous benefactor of the College of Nursing and Health Professions and its nursing programs.

\* \* \*

Congratulations to **Peggy Graul, Karen Jones, Dr. Jane Swartz, Michelle Woodburn, Sharri Herriott, and Jennifer Hertel** on receiving accreditation as a provider of continuing education through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). USI was awarded accreditation with distinction, the highest recognition awarded by ANCC. This accreditation is for four years, which is the maximum time awarded by ANCC.

For a complete list of certificate programs, visit <https://www.usi.edu/health/certificate-programs>

# USI students bring home Critical Care Challenge trophy



*Dr. Jane Swartz, Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf, and Dr. Tracy Kinner celebrate with their students after winning the competition.*

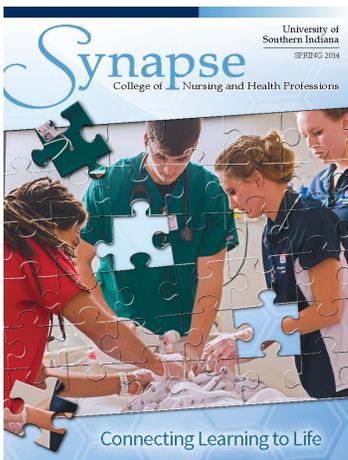
Twelve senior BSN students from USI defended their title by winning the 23rd annual Critical Care Challenge, sponsored by the Greater Evansville Chapter of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses on April 15, 2014. During this event, registered nurse teams and college of nursing teams compete by answering core curriculum critical care questions. This annual event brings nurses and students together to celebrate critical care nursing in our area.

USI team members were Hannah Bartlett, Justin Blinn, Korrine Boyer, Karen Hoss, Kayla Heldman, Lauren Hoover, Jordan Morrison, Calla Niebrugge, Sally Price, Byron Rademacher, Tracie Thompson, and Audrey Wells. Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf, Dr. Jane Swartz and Dr. Tracy Kinner coached the students. St. Mary's Medical Center won first place in the hospital competition.

## Alumni News

**Amanda Elikofer**, 2009 nursing graduate, was named the recipient of the 2013 Foundation Nurse Fellow by the Society of Trauma Nurses and the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma (EAST). The award gives Elikofer the opportunity to gain access to key leaders in trauma care. She is the trauma program manager at Deaconess Regional Trauma Center in Evansville, and is also a student in USI's nursing master's program.

As the 2013 Nurse Fellow, Elikofer will receive support for travel, hotel, and registration fees made possible by donations to the EAST Foundation Board Nurse Fellow program. She will also be assigned a mentor to assist in designing a plan for programs to attend and arranging interviews with trauma care leaders.



## Synapse magazine for the College of Nursing and Health Professions

*Coming soon to your mailbox or read online by clicking on the cover!*

*Return to the Heart of Nursing*



**Nursing Alumni Society**

***Reconnect, reminisce, and network with fellow Nursing Alumni by joining the USI Nursing Alumni Society!***

**Click for info!**

***Do you have news to share?***

Email Mary T. Scheller at [mtscheller@usi.edu](mailto:mtscheller@usi.edu)

# Nursing grad receives President's Medal

Jordan Morrison, a first-generation college student, graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from the University of Southern Indiana. He is the first student in the history of USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions to receive the President's Medal, the highest honor presented to a graduate in the Class of 2014.

Described by his professors and advisors as a "natural leader," Morrison has excelled in both academic and volunteer efforts while at USI. As a nursing student maintaining a 3.88 GPA, he was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society in 2013 and was the recipient of the Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges award in 2012, 2013, and 2014. He was chosen by faculty to represent USI on the first Critical Care Dedicated Education Unit, a collaboration with Deaconess Hospital. He also was chosen to participate in USI's pilot program for Medical/Surgical Nursing Designation Educational Unit and the first Nursing Management Designated Educational Unit.

Over the course of his four years at USI, Morrison has served in multiple volunteer leadership roles including president of the Association of Nursing Students, chair of the Food Drive Committee, co-chair of the Fundraiser



*Dr. Gina Schaar and Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf congratulate Jordan Morrison during CNHP's Honors Convocation on April 14.*

Committee, chair of the New Nursing Student Outreach Committee, and co-chair of the Community Outreach Committee.

Marilyn Ostendorf, assistant clinical professor of nursing, said, "Jordan demonstrates natural leadership ability and shows dynamic leadership qualities."

## Honors Day scholarship recipients



*Above, Kim Harper, center, presented the Indiana Center for Nursing Scholarship to Kathryn East and Byron Rademacher.*

*At left, Dr. Jennifer Titzer presented the USI Nursing Alumni Scholarship to Brittany Wilson.*