

University of  
Southern Indiana

FALL 2012

# Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions



# Internship

# Letter from the Dean

Get the Edge.



White

Welcome to the College of Nursing and Health Professions 2012 fall issue of *Synapse*. As the second dean in the history of the college, I am honored to serve in this capacity and to extend this welcome to all of you who support the college. This issue of *Synapse* focuses on our core values of leadership and service engagement that are so critical in today's healthcare environment.

We are proud to showcase the achievements of our faculty, such as Jennifer Bartek who is serving on the Indiana State Board of Dentistry. She is one of two dental hygienists to serve in the history of this board. We congratulate our graduates who have successfully achieved licensure/registry/certification by passing the professional examination for their disciplines. Several of our programs had 100 percent of their graduates pass these exams on the first attempt. We also are proud of our students who rank as some of the highest achieving students in the history of the college and of the University.

Our faculty have led in curricular innovation, enhancing evidence-based practice in each discipline, and providing services to the surrounding geographic area. During the 2011-2012 academic year, College of Nursing and Health Professions students provided more than 300,000 clinical or internship hours. These experiences serve our students well as they prepare to enter a highly competitive work force. These hours also document a commitment to community engagement and interprofessional learning experiences. Students are working in and with community healthcare agencies to gain experience in all facets of their disciplines and to build their knowledge and skills in teamwork.

We also want to recognize our donors—those individuals who provide the resources for our students and programs to succeed.

To each of you, thank you for what you do. We are proud that you are associated with the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Indiana.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ann White'.

Dr. Ann White  
Dean, College of Nursing  
and Health Professions

# Synapse

College of Nursing and Health Professions

Synapse magazine is published for alumni by the University of Southern Indiana College of Nursing and Health Professions.

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**On the cover**

*Internships provide students with experiential learning as well as a jump start on career opportunities.*

*See page 2*



Scott Ernstberger, USI senior intern at Professional Eyecare Associates, works with employees on a new electronic medical records system.



# Experiential Learning

## Employers' Hiring Preferences Relative to Experience (by percent of respondents)

Hiring Preference	2012	2011	2010
I prefer to hire candidates with relevant work experience	73.7%	72.4%	76.6%
I prefer to hire candidates with any type of work experience (doesn't matter if it is relevant or not, just some type of experience)	17.5%	17.6%	15.9%
Work experience doesn't typically factor into my decision when hiring a new college graduate	4.1%	5.3%	2.5%
Other	4.6%	4.7%	5.0%

Nearly three-quarters of the employers taking part in the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) Job Outlook 2012 survey said they prefer to hire job candidates who have pertinent experience. On the other side, just four percent of employers said experience didn't factor into their decision when hiring new college graduates.

# Internships give students a head start on experience

**N**avigating through college is only part of the journey. Graduates are faced with a myriad of decisions about their future. What is the right career track? How do I know this is what I want to do for the rest of my life? What if they're looking for someone with more experience?

Students in USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions are finding the answers to many of those questions before they graduate. Through internship experiences, they apply what they've learned in the classroom, explore career options, network with peers, and gain experience that gives them the edge as they enter the workforce.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) 2011 student survey, 60 percent of seniors who completed internships received job offers. In a separate NACE study, responding organizations reported that 42 percent of their 2011 college hires came from their own internship programs.

More than a year ago, alumnus Martin Mindrup '12, then a food and nutrition major, completed an internship in food production for SWIRCA & More, Southwest Indiana's resource for aging. This summer, SWIRCA hired Mindrup as an assistant manager. It's just one example of how making early connections can lead to opportunities after graduation. It's also a scenario that plays itself out time and again says Kathy Weinzapfel, career coordinator for USI's Career Services and Placement.

"Internships are important in so many ways," she says. "They introduce students to new employment options; allow them to apply their academic skills, gain on-the-job experience, and apply professional skills; and give them opportunities to demonstrate potential that sometimes earns them fulltime employment. A student's goal should always be to learn and grow through the experience but, if a job offer comes along, that's icing on the cake."

At least four graduates earned fulltime positions as a result of internships this past summer.

Students generally meet the internship requirements by their junior year. They can earn up to three credit hours and take up to two internships for credit. Most internships require 150 hours of service.

Internships provide the insight and understanding of current healthcare topics that can't be found in textbooks or a sterile classroom experience. Students do real work, solve real problems, and assist local and regional healthcare organizations in meeting their goals.

## **An exercise in confidence**

Beyond the obvious benefits, the experience also can give students a deeper appreciation of the nature of the healthcare field through leadership and team work opportunities. Interns are required to think on their feet and be an active part of work place solutions. Alisa Reibel, a health services major interning with Evansville Surgical Associates this semester, is a prime example. She is working directly under company CEO Bill Hammonds on a project that directly affects all 21 surgeons in the cooperative.

Reibel began in July, working in a variety of positions, from switchboard and intake appointments to insurance, billing, and other day-to-day aspects of the business. Hammonds also scheduled a series of 16

interviews for Reibel with top-level executives at local hospitals and other healthcare providers. "Within a month, I found myself becoming a better manager," said Reibel. "He's made me work for it 100 percent, but I realize it's going to make me better when I graduate."

Her latest project is overseeing a major move for Evansville Surgical Associates to a new location. She meets directly with Hammonds, the building contractor, and with the surgeons in the group to determine their needs and serve as a liaison between all the parties. She is assisting with everything from deciding the new location to determining where offices and administrators will be located as the new facility is renovated. "It's exciting but scary at the same time," Reibel says, when talking about the level of responsibility that's been put on her. "It makes me feel stronger as a decision maker. Mr. Hammonds has taught me that you have to step up and make decisions and have faith in yourself."

*continued on next page*



*Bill Hammonds, CEO of Evansville Surgical Associates, left, and Alisa Reibel, USI health services major, plan for moving the business to a new location.*

## Internships continued from page 3

Brittany Culp, a senior health services major, has found confidence in other ways. Her internship through the Tri-State Business Group allows her to work from home, helping to promote and implement the web-based Leap Frog Program, a consumer reports portal for hospitals and other healthcare organizations.

Because she has to work directly with hospital and other healthcare administrators, she has been able to build a strong network of professional contacts. "It gets my name out there and exposes me to potential references and career possibilities," she says. Her advice to others, "Do something hands on. Get involved, and don't be afraid to ask questions. It's the only way you're going to get the experience you need in the long run."

### Finding the right experience

USI and the College of Nursing and Health Professions work closely with participating healthcare partners to customize experiences that are right for the student and the organization. Interns also set goals prior to their field experience. They're asked to think about specific objectives and discuss them with their faculty advisors.

"I chose this internship because I believe that learning in this setting will help me in the future," said Scott Ernstberger, a senior interning with Professional Eyecare Associates in Evansville. Part of his role is learning a new electronic medical records (EMR) system and teaching that technology to the optometrists and others at the office.

"Computer records are the future of the healthcare industry," he adds. "When it comes to the business side of healthcare, I'll be learning a lot in my internship that will better prepare me for my future in healthcare. Companies want employees who have experience. My experience is giving me the confidence to know what to do and how to get it done in a timely manner. It also will allow me to see if this is the kind of setting I want to be in."

The work that Ernstberger is doing is a continuation of a project started by Jessica McBride, a 2012 health administration graduate, who interned with Professional Eyecare Associates in spring 2012. As part of her work, she installed the EMR system on 13 office computers and customized the program to fit the office's needs.

"I learned to thrive in a leadership role," she said. "This was something I hadn't done

before. I was used to working at a hospital. This seemed different and interesting." She also spent a semester interning with a local animal hospital, an opportunity she thought of during a trip to her vet. "It opened me up to a whole new idea of healthcare," she said.

### Meeting goals

Students' goals can range from gaining a better understanding of expectations and duties of healthcare leaders and learning about career choices in their field, to gaining valuable knowledge through observation and participation. As interns they also develop maturity and confidence that translate to their work, both in school and after graduation. Internships fill in the gaps left by traditional education and help students learn what employers expect from employees.

This summer, Jennifer Heck, a health services major, was selected for a special internship with the Interdisciplinary Rural Health Professions offered through the University of Illinois. As part of her experience, she was assigned to the Harrisburg Medical Center, but much of her time was spent conducting research outside the hospital in rural settings, including the Mine Clinic, serving coal miners and their families.

A requirement of Heck's internship was completing a community project, which focused on lung cancer and radon awareness. The area where she worked was

located near underground coal mines, which the Center for Disease Control considers a risk factor for elevated radon levels inside homes. While the Saline County Health Department waited for funding to investigate the radon-related lung cancer incidence in the area, Heck created a brochure and other educational materials to be used as part of an awareness campaign in Southern Illinois.

One of the internship goals was to expose other students to rural healthcare and stimulate interest in this underserved area. "I saw the role of the different disciplines. They work together to deliver healthcare in the rural setting," said Heck.

For Kyle Collins, a health services major with a concentration in health administration, an internship at the Evansville YMCA was a bid to land a full-time position with the YMCA. He spent his summer working toward his goal through a variety of community health initiatives, from diabetes prevention and healthy weight, to a project encouraging children to drink water instead of sugary beverages. He has continued to work with the YMCA beyond the internship.

However, the experience opened his eyes to other career opportunities as well. He was able to sit in on meetings with other local organizations, meet industry peers, and get a better feel for their roles. "I'm now more open to what is available to me," he said.



Jennifer Heck, a health services major, left, and Jaime Byrd, public health administrator at the Egyptian Health Department, check water quality at a site in the Garden of the Gods Recreation Area in Southern Illinois.

## Internship takes Van Laeken to India

Brittney Van Laeken, a nursing major, spent the summer in India on a Global Engagement Internship made possible through USI's International Programs and Studies. She coordinated her four-week trip through Cross-Cultural Solutions, an international volunteer organization—one of the oldest working in the India region.

Her experience took her to the far reaches of Northern India, to the city of Dharamsala in the Himalayas. Since 1959, the city has been an enclave for the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government.

It is separated into two distinct areas with many rural pockets and villages within walking distance. Van Laeken traveled through the rural villages of the Himalayan foothills and performed medical assessments on the local school children and villagers, who normally don't have access to medical care, either as a result of poor transportation or poverty.

She focused on public health and health education during her time in India, particu-

larly in the area of women's issues and assistance for populations of a lower socio-economic status. She researched the weaknesses and strengths of the local culture and its healthcare, as well as issues related to over-population.

"I chose India partly because, even though they've become a very technologically advanced country, they still have a lot of issues with poverty and with diseases that have been eradicated elsewhere, like tuberculosis, malaria, and even polio in some areas," she said.

At 32, and a single mother, Van Laeken is a nontraditional student. She began her education at USI in 1998 as a fine arts major. However, family and life circumstances

didn't allow her to finish her degree. After several moves, she enrolled in USI's Nursing Program and hopes to graduate in 2014. "To be given this opportunity is the equivalent of winning the lottery," she said. "As a single parent, I could never afford something like this on my own. I've always wanted to

**“To be given this opportunity is the equivalent of winning the lottery.”**



Brittney Van Laeken, USI nursing major, right foreground, examines a child in India.

travel internationally."

"Ultimately, I'd love to do international work," she said. "I believe that healthcare is a human right. My goal is to work with a nonprofit organization of some sort whether it's providing public health to local communities here in the United States or working internationally."

## German student gains internship experience through USI

This fall, USI's Health Services Department hosted Anika Beek, a German health management senior from the University of Osnabruck for a seven-week internship. Beek coordinated the internship through Dr. Kevin Valadares, associate professor of health services and health administration at USI. The two met during a recent trip Valadares made to Germany with USI students.

Her internship took her to Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, Indiana, and St. Mary's Hospital in Evansville, Indiana, as well as a tour of hospitals in Chicago. Her experience is different in that she receives no credit for the internship. She decided to pursue the opportunity for her own personal experience and professional growth.

"I was interested in interning in an American hospital to see the difference in how it operates—especially with the differences in our healthcare systems," she said.

She shadowed several departments, including a cancer center, a financial department, and a laboratory. In Germany she is working at a nursing home, so she also spent time visiting nursing homes during her stay.

"I was interested in learning about the lifestyles of other countries as well," said Beek, who stayed with three different host families during her seven-week internship. The host families were arranged by Valadares. "I enjoyed experiencing the different dynamics of family life here."

She plans to share her experiences with others when she returns to Germany. "I'd like to help give others like myself similar opportunities," she said.



Anika Beek, health management senior from the University of Osnabruck in Germany, gets a taste of U.S. culture.

# Continuing education programs make global impact



Certificate programs are making a global impact through convenient, flexible, continuing education opportunities for nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals worldwide.

The 18 certificate programs offered by the College of Nursing and Health Professions feature the convenience of an internet delivery method. They are self-paced and enable interaction with expert faculty and a global community. A variety of topics cover the latest evidence-based information and meet global participants' need for information.

Flexible online learning allows participants to attend class any time of day or night from the convenience of their own home or office. Program faculty are experienced online teachers and are knowledgeable in their particular areas. Nationally-known clinical practitioners have contributed to program development and are available to respond to questions posed by course participants.

"We emphasize the importance of life-long learning through our programs for healthcare professionals," said Karen Jones, director of special projects in the College of

Nursing and Health Professions. "While we stress the convenience of the delivery method, we also stress the quality of the information and instruction. The Certificate programs pertaining to nursing are all accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. It certainly speaks to the USI goal of international involvement."



# Building Global Ties

Students and faculty from the College of Nursing and Health Professions continue to build relationships with two universities in Evansville's sister city, Osnabruck, Germany. The college has sent faculty and students to Germany as well as hosted groups on the USI campus.



Nadine Dutthorn and Manuel Zimansky, right, nursing faculty from the University of Osnabruck in Evansville's sister city in Germany, present a history book on Osnabruck to Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke, left. The pair spent 10 days in Evansville. During their stay, Dutthorn and Zimansky presented at the Nursing and Health Professions Annual Research Conference, guest lectured at classes, promoted exchange and research opportunities, and toured USI's Glenwood Community Health Center. They also attended several community events as representatives of Evansville's sister city.



Two groups of students and faculty from the College of Nursing and Health Professions spent the summer in Germany. Most students received some type of scholarship from USI to help offset the cost of attending.

The first group attended the three-week International Summer School at the University of Osnabruck. The group included eleven students in nursing, occupational therapy, dental hygiene, and radiology. Course options included German language and culture, healthcare through the lifecycle, and democratic governance. Students heard guest lectures from experts around the world. Classes were made up of 65 students from 26 countries and participants had opportunities for cultural exploration as well. The program is in its second year. Dr. Brandon Eggleston, assistant professor of health services and administration, accompanied the group and co-taught a course with Dr. Karen Parker, assistant professor of nursing at USI.

A second group of students attended the International Summer University at the University of Applied Sciences—Hochschule Osnabruck. The group, at left, included three students from the College of Business and eight from the College of Nursing and Health Professions. They took courses on international business, international marketing, physical therapy, healthcare management, and economics. The trip included field excursions to Berlin, Paris, and Vienna. Eggleston taught a course with Dr. Daria Sevastianova, assistant professor of economics at USI. This is the third year for the program and the third year USI has participated.



A group of 19 German students spent a week at USI this summer as part of their Block Week, senior-level experience. The program was hosted by USI and coordinated by Dr. Brandon Eggleston, assistant professor of health services and administration, fourth from right. Students toured the USI campus as well as several sites in Evansville, including Deaconess and St. Mary's hospitals. They also took time to experience U.S. culture. The group spent their final day visiting Rush Hospital in Chicago and exploring the city before returning to Germany.

# Trudy Mitchell: Reflections on a lifetime of service

Trudy Mitchell has been a friend and supporter of the College of Nursing and Health Professions since its earliest years. She and her late husband William H. Mitchell were involved with the University in countless ways, both financially and through personal interest and involvement in its programs and people. Building a stronger healthcare community in the region has always been a priority.

Both of Mrs. Mitchell's parents were diagnosed with cancer. Her mother died of cancer in 1972, and Trudy Mitchell is a cancer survivor. "I'm thankful for being a survivor," she said. "But so much has changed in the field now. That's one of the reasons I continue to support the college."

Her earliest support for the healthcare field dates back to the couple's involvement with Deaconess Hospital in Evansville. Even though they lived in Illinois, they saw the need for a strong healthcare community in the region. "We decided to support the hospital and saw a need to build a stronger healthcare community," she said. "We later saw how USI could help meet that community need as well."

Over the years, the Mitchells endowed a nursing scholarship that benefits two students each year and a faculty enhance-

ment fund for the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The Health Professions Center's 450-seat Mitchell Auditorium, for which they provided classroom technology, is named in their honor.

The Mitchells were always impressed by the vision for the University and for its future. Mr. Mitchell became involved with USI's Board of Trustees and Mrs. Mitchell eventually became part of the Foundation Board. She continues to serve as director emerita of the USI Foundation.

She also remains on the Foundation Board at Deaconess Hospital. During visits to the hospital she often meets students she was able to help, who are now employed by the hospital. "It's important that they're there, but we also have to keep them there," she said, reflecting on her desire to continue support for health initiatives at USI and in the region. "I'm thankful to have been able to do what we've done."

She plans to continue to support the University and the college through her will and estate plan. She also stands behind Dr. Ann White as she begins her tenure as dean of the college. "Dr. [Nadine] Coudret did an outstanding job, and I know that Dr. White will as well," she said. "She's behind the college as it moves in new directions."



Mitchell

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*continued on next page*

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University of Southern Indiana

# Dr. Ann White becomes second dean of college

Dr. Ann H. White has accepted the position of dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Southern Indiana. She is the second dean in the history of the college. The announcement was made this summer by Dr. Ronald Rochon, provost of the University.

"I'm excited about Dr. White taking over this leadership position," said Dr. Rochon. "She brings brilliance and a wealth of experience and competency to the college. She is highly competent in the areas of nursing and health professions."

Dr. White served as interim dean of the college since July 2011, when Dean Nadine Coudret announced her retirement. She also served as interim dean in 2009 when Dr. Coudret served for a short time as interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

"I'm excited to be named the second dean in the history of the College of Nursing and Health Professions," said Dr. White. "I look forward to working with faculty, students, and staff as our college continues to offer health professions education for the future."

She previously served the College of Nursing and Health Professions as professor of nursing, associate dean of nursing, and program director for the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. She joined the University in 1990.

Dr. White earned her Ph.D. in nursing education from Georgia State University in 1998, an M.B.A. from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1989, a master's



*Ann White, left, awards diplomas to graduates during spring commencement in 2012.*

degree in nursing from the University of Cincinnati in 1981, a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Iowa in 1979, and a nursing diploma from Allen Memorial School of Nursing in 1972. She is a registered nurse in both Indiana and Kentucky and a board-certified nursing executive.

She holds a number of professional memberships, has been published in numerous journals and publications, and is a regular presenter at regional conferences and events. She was instrumental in helping to secure several grants for USI, including a Doctor of Nursing Practice program expansion grant, and Health Resources and Services

Administration grants for the USI Glenwood Community Health Center, and equipment for the college's Simulation Center.

She has been involved with numerous community initiatives including the Indiana Breast Cancer Awareness Trust, the Mid-America Institute on Aging, Indiana Area Health Education Center, Southwest Indiana Area Health Education Center, the Leadership and Management Conference Planning Committee, Youth Resources, and Southwestern Behavioral Health, Inc. She also worked with local public television station, WNIN, on a 2007 nursing special "Who Will Care for Us."

## Dr. Mayola Rowser named assistant dean



Rowser

Dr. Mayola Rowser has accepted the position of assistant dean for the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The announcement was made by Dr. Ann White, dean of the college. Dr. Rowser continues to serve as the graduate nursing program director and as associate professor of nursing.

"I am pleased that Dr. Rowser has assumed the position of assistant dean," said Dr. White. "She has demonstrated leadership with the USI Glenwood Community Health Center and the graduate nursing program. I know that she will bring this leadership to her new role."

Dr. Rowser earned an associate's degree from the University of Evansville; bachelor and master's degrees from the University of Southern Indiana; and Family Nurse Practitioner, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner certificates and

Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Ph.D. degrees, all from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. She holds certifications and licenses from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, Indiana State Board of Nursing, and the Indiana Controlled Substance Regulation.

"I'm pleased to accept the position of assistant dean," said Rowser. "I look forward to working with Dean White and the faculty and staff and to the continued growth and success of our programs."

She previously served as an assistant professor of nursing and as project coordinator, project director, and principal investigator for a Health Resource Services Administration grant. Dr. Rowser joins Deborah Carl Wolf as one of two assistant deans for the college.

## Meet newcomers to the faculty and staff

**Dr. Gregory Breeden**, assistant professor of health services and administration, was most recently an assistant professor at Clemson University in the Department of Public Health Sciences.



Breeden

He earned a doctorate in social and behavioral sciences in the Department of Health Policy and Management from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. He completed a master's degree in health services at the University of Washington and post-doctoral fellowships at UCLA in family research and at the University of Michigan in the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture, and Health, where he also was named the 2004-06 Paul B. Cornely Postdoctoral Scholar.

He worked for many years as a senior public health educator in the Division of Community Health Promotion at the DeKalb County Board of Health in Atlanta. He is a member of the American Public Health Association, American Association of Suicidology, and the College on Problems of Drug Dependence and Society of Prevention Research. He has been published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

**Dr. Frank Ward** is an assistant professor and director of Health Services. He was previously associated with Lorain County Community College in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was the dean of Allied Health and Nursing.



Ward

He earned an associate degree as a hospital services technician from The George Washington University, a bachelor's degree in science at the University of Nebraska, and a master's degree in hospital administration and management at Central Michigan University. He completed a doctoral degree in higher education administration at The George Washington University. He is retired from the United States Navy and has academic experience in public universities, medical schools, and community colleges. He also

has a clinical background as a physician assistant. He is a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Medical Administrators.

**Beth Young**, instructor in food and nutrition, has been employed as an adjunct faculty member at USI for five years. She previously worked for five years as a registered dietitian in worksite wellness for Welborn Health Plans/Meritain Health.



Young

She also has served as a clinical nutrition manager at Healthsouth Rehabilitation Hospital and a long-term-care consulting dietitian for MEP Healthcare/Supreme Care West. She earned her bachelor's degree in dietetics and a master's degree in family and consumer science from Ball State University. She is a registered dietitian, and a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Indiana Dietetic Association, and the Southwest Indiana Dietetic Association.

**Elizabeth Ramos**, instructor in food and nutrition, has worked since 2005 as a nutritional consultant and registered dietitian consultant at Golden Living Centers and AseraCare Hospice.



Ramos

For the past two years she also has taught courses at USI and at University of Evansville. Previous work includes food service director at the University of Illinois, Champaign and project coordinator for the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Ramos is a commissioned officer with the United States Army Medical Specialists Corps. She earned a bachelor's degree in home economics and dietetics from Villa Maria College and a master's degree in home economics and nutrition

from Eastern Illinois University. She also holds certificates in nutrition and dietetics from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Eastern Illinois University. She is a registered dietician and a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, a licensed dietitian nutritionalist in Illinois, a certified dietician in Indiana, a member of the Indiana Dietetic Association, and a past member of the Illinois Dietetic Association.

**Mary Doerner** is an instructor in nursing. She has been a nurse for more than 30 years. Since 1996, she has worked in outpatient surgery at the Evansville Surgery Center.



Doerner

Previous clinical practice includes work in critical care and post anesthesia care units, and as a traveling nurse. She earned an associate's degree in nursing from Hopkinsville Community College (then part of the University of Kentucky), and a bachelor's degree in nursing from Murray State University in Kentucky. She also earned a master's degree in nursing from USI in 2006, and a post master's certificate in nursing education from USI in 2008.

**Jo D. Kostka** is an instructor in nursing. She previously served for seven years as assistant professor in nursing at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.



Kostka

She earned her master's degree in nursing from Creighton, associate's degree in nursing and bachelor's degree in business administration from St. Mary's College, and a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. She is currently working toward a doctoral degree at National Louis University in Chicago.

Prior to teaching, Kostka retired after 30 years as a nurse with the Veterans Administration, four of which were with the U.S. Air Force as a civil servant. In addition to teaching, she spent two years in seminary where she participated in mission work. She worked in Kenya, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic with

Creighton's University's Institute for Latin American Concern, where she was nursing director for two years. She recently traveled to Haiti, where she volunteered with St. Joseph Catholic Church.

# Two faculty named information technology scholars

What started as a grant-funded training exercise has led two faculty members to an innovative project revolutionizing how the College looks at health information technology. Jennifer Titzer, instructor of nursing, and Dr. Constance Swenty, assistant professor of nursing, were accepted into the Health Information Technology Scholars (HITS) program in 2011, to learn how to integrate informatics into the nursing curriculum.

Health informatics deals with resources, devices, and methods of storing and retrieving patient and healthcare-related information. It includes not only computers but also clinical guidelines, medical terminologies, and information and communication systems.

Only 265 faculty were accepted into the HITS program out of 1,766 applicants nationwide, putting the college in the top 15 percent. This is the last year for HITS, which was supported by a five-year, \$1.5 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Bureau of Health Professions in partnership with the Office of Health Information Technology.

As part of the grant-funded project, Titzer and Swenty developed a project through the college's simulation lab. The characters and case studies used in their simulation were based on tracking medical history and other risk factors for several members of a hypothetical Hispanic family. The project was

accepted and the two spent four days in March working with HITS faculty to further develop their project.

One outcome of the project was the discovery that a more robust electronic medical record system was needed at USI. Local hospitals and other healthcare providers are already using this type of system, but graduates often have to learn that technology on the job.

The two were able to secure funding through the college to purchase Cerner medical records software. "Because the vendor knew we were HITS faculty, we were able to get a considerable discount and avoid passing any additional cost on to the students," said Titzer.

The system has now been in use since August of 2011. "Without HITS we would not be at this level. It has really propelled us forward—as far as bringing informatics into the curriculum, increasing simulation, and providing us with a bigger vision of what we can do as a college."

Since then, use of the software has expanded and, in spring 2012, an inter-professional informatics project was formed.



A student monitors vital signs of a patient in the simulation lab.

The system is providing students with the kind of training they need to be ready for the systems they'll use in a post-graduation work environment. During a pilot project, clinical students submitted charting assignments through the new system while working at local hospitals.

"The end goal is to increase health informatics competence, increase patient safety, and improve outcomes," Titzer said.

Titzer and Swenty continue to refine the software and integrate it with other programs. They also are pursuing additional grants to provide faculty, equipment, and consultants to more fully integrate the system.



## Volunteers recognized

Six healthcare professionals were recently recognized for assisting the college with student education.

Dr. Ann White, dean, center right, and Dr. Linda L. M. Bennett, center left, thank volunteers, from left, Suzanne Stewart, 2,580 hours—St. Mary's Hospital; Jarrod Brown, 2,580 hours—Deaconess Gateway; Doris Allen, 2,580 hours—Jasper Hospital; and Melinda Brown, 1,452 hours—Deaconess Clinic. Not pictured, Christa Cole, 2,580 hours—Methodist Hospital; and Angela Hollingsworth, 2,580 hours—Deaconess Hospital. All of the volunteers are clinical instructors for radiology and serve on the Radiology Advisory Committee. Their names will be displayed on a plaque outside of Carter Hall in the University Center. "With the support of area healthcare organizations, we provide quality education to all of our students," said Dr. White.

### Bartek appointed to Indiana State Board of Dentistry

Jennifer Bartek, clinical assistant professor in dental hygiene, has been appointed by Governor Mitch Daniels to a three-year term on the Indiana State Board of Dentistry.



Bartek

"It is important for dental hygienists to have a voice," said Dr. Ann White, dean of the USI College of Nursing and Health Professions.

"Jennifer is only the second dental hygienist

to serve on this board."

As a member of the board, Bartek will be responsible for enforcing laws pertaining to the practice of dentistry and of dental hygiene. As sole representation on the board for the profession of dental hygiene, she is prepared to represent her colleagues and is confident that her clinical and teaching experiences, coupled with knowledge of the rules governing the profession, will prove valuable. "It's an honor to serve on the Indiana State Board of Dentistry and use my time and talent for the benefit of the public and my profession," she said.

### McCullough is Outstanding Dietetics Educator

Dr. Julie McCullough, program director and associate professor of Food and Nutrition, was named the 2012 Outstanding Dietetics Educator for Area 5 of the Nutrition and



McCullough

Dietetic Educators and Preceptors group, which covers Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. She was selected in the Didactic Program in Dietetics category.

"Your nomination and support from your peers and students is

quite an honor and speaks well of your education efforts," said Vicky Getty, Area 5 coordinator. Each year the group selects one

educator from each of the seven districts across the country that forms the organization. Recipients are recognized for their significant contributions to educating future practitioners.

"I'm so pleased and thankful to have received this award from my peers outside the University, letters of support from the food and nutrition students at USI, and words of encouragement from everyone in the College of Nursing and Health Professions," said McCullough. "I appreciate being able to work and collaborate with people who care about commitment and quality."

McCullough began her career at USI in 1999 as an instructor and later became assistant professor. In 2006, she became a tenured associate professor. Prior to coming to USI, she worked as a clinical consultant.

### Shirey earns prestigious award in education excellence

Dr. Maria Shirey, associate professor of nursing, is the 2012 recipient of the Ildaura Murillo-Rohde Award for Education Excellence, presented by the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN). The award honors NAHN members who have distinguished themselves in any scholarship area and/or nursing education. Outstanding contributions in nursing education, research and practice, recognized commitment to excellence in nursing, or distinguished clinical expertise are award qualifiers.



Shirey

Shirey received the award during the NAHN Annual Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"Dr. Rhode was a pioneer nurse leader, educator, and researcher. She was an inspiration for countless nurses, and I am thankful to receive an award named in her honor," said Shirey.

Shirey, a nurse executive with more than 30 years of experience in the healthcare field, teaches in the graduate programs focusing on leadership and management in both the Master of Science and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs.

### Critical Care Challenge

USI nursing students once again excelled at the 21st annual Critical Care Challenge, sponsored by the Greater Evansville Chapter of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN). USI won this year's student team competition and have won the same honor in eight of the last nine years.

During the event, registered nurse teams and college nursing teams compete by answering core critical care curriculum questions. The USI team was comprised of 10 seniors: Lauren Balbach, Ryan Butler, Katie Faver, Carlie Joranstaad, Marissa McGuire, Libby Rynkiewich, Rachael Seibert, Kasey Spicer, Mallory Swartzentruber, and Katie Voyles. The students were coached by faculty and AACN members, Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf, and Dr. M. Jane Swartz.



USI's student team displays the winning trophy they earned in the Critical Care Challenge.

Students spent hours reviewing core curriculum content and answering sample questions. Practice sessions also focused on team-building concepts and consensus. "Our students worked hard and represented USI well," said Ostendorf.

St. Mary's Medical Center won the hospital award. Their team of six included four recent USI graduates.

### College is recipient of two AHEC awards

The College of Nursing and Health Professions and Dr. Nadine Coudret, retired dean of the college, were honored in April during the Indiana Area Health Education Center Network's annual meeting in Indianapolis.



## Partnership Matters Award

The Southwest Indiana Area Health Education Center (SWI-AHEC) selected USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions as its recipient for this year's Partnership Matters Award. Each of the eight regional AHECS in Indiana selects a recipient.

The award is given to organizations or individuals whose partnership has provided outstanding opportunity for success of local AHEC programs. Criteria include collaboration and good use of resources to build a stronger health community.



*Dr. Jane Friona presents the Partnership Matters Award to Dr. Ann White, dean of the College.*

## Coudret selected for AHEC Hero Award

Dr. Nadine Coudret, dean emerita, was selected for this year's Indiana AHEC Network Hero Award. The Indiana office selects one winner statewide from nominations submitted.



*Dr. Nadine Coudret receives the AHEC Hero Award from Dr. Rick Kiovsky, director of the Indiana AHEC Network at IU School of Medicine.*

The award is given to an individual or organization going beyond the call of duty to ensure that the mission of the Indiana AHEC Network is successful. The recipient is recognized for outstanding volunteer service, advocacy, or other extraordinary efforts.

Dr. Coudret has a doctorate in higher education administration from Indiana University, with bachelor and master of nursing degrees from the University of Evansville. She served as dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions for 24 years, from 1988 to 2012.

The Indiana AHEC announcement stated, "Responsiveness to the community needs has been a hallmark of Dr. Coudret's career, and she has integrated her passion into the fiber of the College of Nursing and Health Professions."

## Students excel at Emergency Room Challenge



USI senior nursing students placed first among college teams and third overall in the Emergency Nurses Week Challenge sponsored by the Emergency Nurses Association Chapter 137 on October 11, 2012. Team members are Phillip Anderson, Ted Baskett, Christy Hamon, Kristin Hutchison, Shelby Key, Cory Matthews, Gary Radford, Dana Strickler, Mitch Washburn, and Doug Wathen. Team coaches were Dr. Marilyn Ostendorf, Dr. Jane Swartz, and Dr. Tracy Kinner.

## Two earn doctoral degrees

Janet Kilbane, assistant professor and academic fieldwork coordinator in occupational therapy, received her doctoral degree in occupational therapy in May from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



*Kilbane*

Mary Jane Swartz, assistant professor of nursing, received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from USI in May.



*Swartz*

## Coming Together to Fight Cancer



Students in the Health Professions Living Learning Community formed a team for the Colleges Against Cancer initiative sponsored by Relay for Life. Their team, the HP Healers, worked with students from the Food and Nutrition Student Organization to cook bake sale items in the Health Professions Nutrition Lab to sell at the event.



Senior nursing student Shawn Riggs administers a cholesterol screening at Culver School in Evansville.

## Million Hearts

A new service learning grant at USI is helping to fund Million Hearts, an initiative endorsed by the American Heart Association, with the goal of preventing one million heart attacks and strokes over a five-year period. The program began this fall and will continue in the spring.

The grant funded the purchase of 250 cholesterol screening kits at a cost of \$6 each. Additional funding has been used to create educational materials and ways of encouraging participants. Students in USI's senior-level community health nursing class are providing cholesterol and blood pressure screening, as well as smoking cessation resources for local organizations like Hope Hall, Potter's Wheel Ministries, and the USI Glenwood Community Health Center.

"We're taking this initiative to the underserved in the community," said Julie St. Clair, clinical assistant professor of nursing. "These people are least likely to receive this type of information. We're trying to get to the people with the highest risk." After cholesterol kits run out, the educational portion of the program will continue.

## Peer-to-Peer

Faculty collaborate to strengthen scholarly writing

Dr. Maria Shirey, associate professor of nursing, and Dr. Elizabeth Bonham, assistant professor of nursing, have been awarded a USI Major as Home grant for the establishment and study of a community of faculty scholars project in the College of Nursing and Health Professions.

The purpose of the college-wide initiative is to strengthen scholarly writing among the college's faculty through a faculty retreat and a scholarly peer-mentored writing practicum.

"We consider this project and intervention to build scholarly writing capacity," said Shirey. "Findings of this work will help us better understand the process of becoming a scholar and remaining a scholar, which will put the college in a better position to support and cultivate a scholarly environment."

Thirty participants, forming six interdisciplinary teams, are led by volunteer mentors from the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Each participant is expected to submit one peer-reviewed manuscript during the year-long program.



Participants in a community of faculty scholars project share ideas during the program's kick off in May.

The program kicked off in May with a retreat facilitated by Dr. Kathleen Heinrich at KTH Consulting in Guilford, Connecticut, and author of *A Nurse's Guide to Presenting and Publishing: Dare to Share*. The project is now in a discovery and research phase. So far, one manuscript has been completed and accepted. The group anticipates having additional results available this spring.

Shirey said the process has been successful so far and the college has already agreed to fund the project again in 2013.

## Outstanding Advisor Awards

Two faculty members from the College of Nursing and Health Professions were recognized by USI for outstanding advising of students. They included Dr. Ethel Elkins in health services, and Dr. Gina Schaar in nursing.

Outstanding advisors are nominated by students and chosen by the Provost Office for their strong interpersonal skills; availability to advisees, faculty, or staff; frequency of contact with advisees; appropriate referral activity; use and dissemination of appropriate information sources; caring, helpful attitude toward advisees, faculty, and staff; monitoring of student progress toward academic and



Elkins



Schaar

career goals; and mastery of institutional regulations, policies, and procedures. The honor comes with a \$1,000 award, taken as a stipend or as professional development funds.

## Grant provides dental service, teaching opportunities

The Dental Hygiene Program recently received a \$2,000 service learning grant from the University to help promote opportunities for faculty to engage students in service learning projects related to dental assisting and dental hygiene. Service learning projects at USI foster community engagement and fall somewhere between volunteering and internship/field placement.

The grant funded a two-day program, August 1-2, for faculty members who provided free services for local dental patients with a financial need. Retired dentist and full-time faculty member Dr. Sam Euler conducted examinations for patients and gave advice on oral issues ranging from simple checkups to extensive dental work.

"Our main reason for doing this is to help our faculty understand the importance of service learning projects for both students and the community that is served," said Emily Holt, clinical assistant professor of dental hygiene and dental assisting, who secured the grant.

Over the two days, a team of five faculty members consisting of Jennifer Bartek, Emily Holt, Sheri Kipling, Kim Parsons, and Dr. Euler saw more than 31 patients. Two of the faculty with previous service learning experience served as mentors for the group. "Any time we can get our faculty on board and help them to understand the impact that service learning can make, it helps them become more creative about incorporating these kinds of opportunities

into their classes," added Holt. "We also knew that we could benefit the community while serving our own needs."

In addition to an exam, patients received dental hygiene treatment, x-rays, fluoride treatments, and a rechargeable power toothbrush to take home. Patients also were offered paid roundtrip transportation through the Evansville METS bus system.

### Clinic offers ongoing services

Students in the Dental Hygiene Program receive real-world experience in the USI Dental Hygiene Clinic.

The clinic, located in Room 1044 in the Health Professions Center, offers low-cost, professional services to adults and children of all ages. Services are performed by dental hygiene students and are supervised by USI faculty.

"The clinic is a great place for students to take what they've learned in class and apply it to real-world situations," says Haley Southard, a recent graduate of the Dental Hygiene Program. "It also allowed us to share our knowledge, and to teach our clients how to take better care of themselves. The experience stretches our minds in a way that a classroom can't."

The clinic offers dental hygiene treatment, radiographs (x-rays), fluoride, and sealants, all for one low fee. Appointments range from 90 minutes to several hours, depending on



Emily Holt, clinical assistant professor of dental assisting, cleans a patient's teeth during a grant-funded program at USI's Dental Hygiene Clinic.

the age of the patient and services included.

During the fall semester (September through December), appointments are available at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. During the spring semester (January through April), appointment times are 8 a.m., 1 p.m., and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

More information is available in the clinic's online brochure at [health.usi.edu/dental\\_clinic](http://health.usi.edu/dental_clinic).

## Legislative Lesson: Student gains valuable knowledge in healthcare legislation

In March, Joy Cook, clinical coordinator and clinical assistant professor of USI's radiologic and imaging sciences program, traveled to Washington D.C. to lobby for a bill that would impact the radiology and imaging sciences profession across the United States.

In May, Cook, along with radiologic technology student Melanie Zeilinga, and Amy Wilson, clinical assistant professor of diagnostic medical sonography, followed up with Congressman Larry Buchson in Evansville. They advocated for the Consumer Assurance of Radiological Excellence (CARE) bill, which would ensure that basic minimum education and certification standards are established as part of the Medicare program for all medical imaging and radiation therapy personnel.

Zeilinga studied the bill and learned about lobbying and advocating for legislation.

"There are some lessons that are difficult to teach in the classroom and this is where the hands-on experiences make the difference in education," said Cook. "The meaningful experiences that happen when students are involved in the legislative process provide them with professional experiences and a first-hand look at how laws are created."

Since their first visit with Congressman Buchson, the CARE bill (HR 2104) has received 130 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, including Buchson, who signed the bill the week after their visit. The bill was introduced to the Senate at the end of June and received six co-sponsors. If not passed this year, Cook said the bill would be re-introduced next year. "I'll hopefully be returning to Washington with a student to lobby again," she said.



From left, radiologic technology student Melanie Zeilinga; Amy Wilson, clinical assistant professor of diagnostic medical sonography; Congressman Larry Buchson; and Joy Cook, clinical assistant professor of radiology technology.



### Good Advice

Student Advising Center will benefit all students

A new advising facility will open its doors this fall within the College of Nursing and Health Professions. The Student Advising Center is both a new space, and a new concept.

Created to provide prospective and current students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the general public with an all-inclusive place to find information and get advice on professions, careers, and educational tracks, it will serve as both an advising center and a resource center for all students in the college, throughout their time at USI.

The center will provide informational meetings, programs, and outreach. While the college already had an advising center in place, the new center will be more comprehensive and will address more fully the needs of students, especially those in their first two years of study.

The Student Advising Center is part of a University-wide initiative to provide a better advising experience for students and, ultimately, to make it possible for more students to succeed.

Deborah Carl Wolf, assistant dean, and program director and assistant professor of dental hygiene, said the advising center could serve more than 2,000 students each semester, including prospective students seeking advice prior to admission. "We have needs that vary in depth and the time needed to handle them," she says. "We have a strong need for this program."

This fall, Dr. Sarah Stevens was hired as the director of the advising center. Dr. Stevens joins Diane Utley and Kristina Walker who have served as advisors in the college for several years, and Connie Walker who has recently been hired as an advisor. Along with

**“We have a strong need for this program.”**

— Deborah Carl Wolf, assistant dean

an administrative assistant, they will form the core of the advising center.

A fifth advisor will be hired during the 2013 fiscal year. In addition to the fulltime advisors, advisors from University Division will serve as liaisons to the advising center and will work with at-risk students. "We're very excited about that," said Wolf. "These are the students with the greatest need for resources available from University Division."

The primary focus will be working with incoming freshmen, but the advising center will be open to anyone needing assistance. The goal is for the fulltime advisors to work with faculty advisors, who often are involved with upper-classmen. Wolf says a process will be in place to move students toward the faculty advisors as they enter their junior and senior year.

One of the greatest areas of need is with students linked to some of the college's highly competitive, limited enrollment programs. "If students don't make it into a program, they're lost," says Wolf. "The conversation really needs to start when they arrive at the University. We need to say, 'Let's look at a variety of options for you.' They need to understand that there's a lot of competition and no guarantees. The advising center will play a key role in helping those students find where they fit in."

### Stevens to lead CNHP Student Advising Center

Dr. Sarah Stevens is the new director of the Student Advising Center in the College of Nursing and Health Professions. She previously worked in USI's University Division, where she advised undecided and at-risk students.



Stevens

In her new role, she will provide academic advising and services to first-year students and

pre-majors in the college. The goal of the newly created position is to oversee a team of advisors providing a seamless transition to the USI community, while enabling students to develop academic plans that best fit their needs, interests, and abilities.

"I'm passionate about helping students," said Stevens. "I'm excited to work with our student body in Nursing and Health Professions and to have the chance to shape the future of the Student Advising Center. The center will empower students to take charge of their educational careers through a collaborative mentoring relationship between advisor and student."

Originally from New Jersey, Stevens also has lived in Virginia, Oregon, China, and Taiwan. Prior to coming to USI, Stevens was the director of international programs at Southern Oregon University, where she worked with international and study abroad students. She has a Ph.D. in Chinese and gender studies, as well as a master's degree from Indiana University, Bloomington. She earned her bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

## Claudia Merkley named USI Distinguished Nursing Alumna



Merkley

**Claudia Merkley**, '97 M'00, acute nurse practitioner at Ohio Valley Heart Care in Evansville, is the 2012 recipient of the USI Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award.

Merkley completed bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing at the University of Southern Indiana, has instructed in the Graduate Nursing Program.

She began work in the healthcare field as an emergency medical technician in Dubois County before joining Deaconess Hospital as a staff nurse 1996. She became a board-certified acute care nurse practitioner in 2000 and has been working at Ohio Valley Heart

Care in cardiothoracic and vascular surgery since that time. In her current role, she is first assistant to cardiothoracic surgeons in the operating room and conducts pre- and post-operative visits for surgical patients.

As president-elect for the Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses of Indiana Region 8, she has been involved in the promotion of the nurse practitioner profession through local and state committees since 2000. In addition, she volunteers at free community peripheral arterial disease (PAD) screenings in an effort to better educate the community and diagnosis the disease in the early stages. She was recently awarded a Certificate of Recognition from the PAD Coalition for her work with the PAD Care Centers Program.

"I am sincerely honored to receive the 2012 USI Distinguished Nursing Alumna

Award," said Merkley. "It validates my commitment to the cardiothoracic and vascular advanced nursing profession."

"I am pleased that Claudia Merkley is receiving the 2012 Distinguished Nursing Alumna Award," said Dr. Ann White, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. "She has supported the nursing programs for many years serving as teaching faculty and as a clinical preceptor. Her clinical expertise and accomplishments within nursing exemplify the caliber of the graduates of the USI nursing programs."

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

## Ayesta earns Outstanding International Graduate Award

Andres Ayesta, '12, dietetics, recently received the Outstanding International Graduate Award from USI's office of International Programs and Services. A native of Caracas Venezuela, he transferred to USI in 2009 on a scholarship through the Study America Program. He is attending the University of Houston dietetic internship this fall.

While at USI, Ayesta received the Food and Nutrition Department's highest honor for academic achievement. He was the first USI international student to receive the prestigious Study America scholarship administered through the Institute of International Education.

"He exemplifies the character of an excellent dietitian," said Dr. Julie McCullough, food and nutrition program director and associate professor of nutrition.

Throughout his academic career, Ayesta sought opportunities for experience both inside and outside the classroom, including internships with Mead Johnson Nutrition, St. Mary's Medical Center, and Operation Fit Kids. He served as president of the Food and Nutrition Student Organization, as well as a bilingual student ambassador for the Office of Admission. He dedicated countless hours to coaching and managing the International Club soccer team, as well as numerous other outreach initiatives on campus and in the community.

"Andres is a self-motivated person with the determination as well as the talent to excel in this field," said Heidi Gregori-Gahan, director of International Programs and Services. "He has been an excellent ambassador for Venezuela."



Ayesta preparing healthy foods at USI.

**Stacy Woodall Gladish** '12, health services, has taken the position of patient access supervisor for St. Mary's Medical Center in Evansville.

**Molly Elfreich** '11, Master in Health Administration, has joined Holly's House as a forensic interviewer/associate director in Evansville.

**John Collins** '06, nursing, was promoted to hospice clinical supervisor at the Visiting Nursing Association in Evansville.

## Desire to help others leads USI nursing graduate to Kenya

**Katie DeFries '04**, a 30-year-old Evansville native and graduate of New Harmony High School is working across the globe, serving the people of Kenya through a mission-based community health initiative.

A USI nursing graduate, she first learned about Kenya during a short trip there in 2005. Interested in mission work and using her nursing background to help others, she learned about the group, New Mission Systems International (NMSI), during an online search, and later joined a 10-day trip to Kenya as part of the organization's Africa Hope project. Her team helped build a dining hall and she accompanied five nurses into rural villages to serve in clinics and get a feel for the medical system in Kenya. While on this trip, she saw the need for more long-term health education.

After graduating from Vanderbilt University as a neonatal nurse practitioner in 2008, she again affiliated with the Africa Hope project and began intensive training to join a team for a three-year commitment. She worked in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for six years, and for one year as a nurse practitioner, while finishing her degree. She officially joined Africa Hope in 2010, just months after graduating.

Her team is part of a community health development project, with a special interest in prenatal and infant healthcare needs and education for the Maasai people of Kenya. She has now been in Kenya for two years. This summer she returned home for the first time for the birth of a nephew. It will most likely be the last time she returns home during her three-year commitment.

Africa Hope uses a Community Health Evangelism (CHE) curriculum. The international curriculum is geared toward community health development and teaching those in the community how to prevent diseases. DeFries says that 80 to 90 percent of cases seen in local hospitals could be prevented. A Bible-study track goes along with the healthcare work and is incorporated throughout the education process.



*Katie DeFries, USI nursing graduate, far right, poses with some of the rural villagers during her clinic mission work that provides healthcare in Kenya.*

DeFries anticipated using her NICU experience in Kenya, but the work she found herself doing was much different. NICU facilities are lacking in the areas she serves, and only available in larger cities where hospitals exist. In the rural villages, the need was for health education and disease prevention.

Her nursing education at USI prepared her well for the work. Even though she has a graduate degree in neonatology, she says it's the early education at USI and classes like community health that are most useful for what she's doing now. "I feel like I'm well-rounded and I have the background and the knowledge I need," she says.

Early on, she worked with local schools—screening and evaluating the children to determine major risk factors, and then presenting those findings to the community. Through a series of educational programs, her team is not only

teaching the local people good health habits, but also empowering them to help others in their own and surrounding communities.

"We're currently working in as many as 11 to 15 villages," she says. "We recently chose the village with the most need, and we'll be working there fulltime starting in January. Our goal is to help them help themselves. The entire project is community-driven and we hope that when we're done here, they can keep it going without our help. I've definitely found purpose in my time here."

DeFries envisions returning to the United States once her three-year commitment is over, but she knows that could change. Her love for the country and its people grows daily, but she also missed her work in the NICU and time with family. "You learn a lot about yourself helping other people," she says.

**Calling all alumni**

Send news along with your degree and year of graduation, major, address, phone number, current position, and employer to [dgutley@usi.edu](mailto:dgutley@usi.edu).

# Get the Edge.



**T**he academic programs in the College of Nursing and Health Professions have a long history of giving graduates the edge on examinations. The 2012 graduates continue this tradition with an outstanding record.

In total, 206 graduates from eight clinical programs successfully completed credentialing examinations in 2012 for an overall college pass rate of 98 percent. All programs scored above the national average.

**Graduates of six of the clinical programs had a 100 percent pass rate this year, including:**

- Dental Hygiene
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Radiologic Imaging
- Respiratory Therapy

In addition, the USI internship placement rate for dietetics graduates averaged 85 percent, well above the national average of 50 percent.

**In the College of Nursing and Health Professions, *our students Get the Edge!***



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Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for USI CNHP.



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## Nursing and Health Professions Continuing Education



MAIA Conference

### 2013 Workshop and Conferences

- Breast Cancer Symposium, February 27
- Heart of Cardiovascular Nursing Conference, March 14
- Healing Touch Workshop, March 9-10
- 10th Annual Nursing Leadership Conference, April 3
- 17th Annual Research, Evidence-Based Practice, and Performance Improvement in Healthcare Issues Conference, April 10
- 19th Annual Case Management Conference, May 9
- 15th Annual Advanced Practice Nursing Symposium, May 10
- 30th Annual Institute for Alcohol and Drug Studies (IADS), May 16 & 17
- 6th Annual Mid-America Institute on Aging, August 8-9
- 10th Annual Pharmacology Update for Advanced Practice Nurses, September 27
- Healing Touch Workshop, October 19-20
- 18th Annual Nursing and Health Professions Educator Conference, October 23
- PEP Rally: A Perinatal Conference, October 9 & 10
- Pediatric Conference, November 12 & 13

### 2013 Certificate Programs (Internet-delivered instruction)

- Local Anesthesia for Dental Hygienists, January 1
- Heart Failure Management, eight weeks, January 4, September 23
- Anticoagulation Therapy Management, eight weeks, January 14, March 18, April 20, July 15, September 30
- Pain Management, eight weeks, January 21, August 5
- Health Promotion and Worksite Wellness, ten weeks, January 21, September 16
- Stroke, eight weeks, January 28, September 16
- Lipid Management, eight weeks, January 28, September 9
- Health Informatics, eight weeks, February 4, August 12
- Diabetes Management, eight weeks, February 11, August 12
- Hypertension Management, eight weeks, February 18, July 29
- Clinical Simulation, four weeks, February 18, September 9
- Oncology Management, eight weeks, March 18, August 19
- Parish/Faith Community Nursing, six weeks, March 25, September 16
- Wound Management, eight weeks, March 25, September 23
- Case Management, eight weeks, April 1, August 19

### Customized programs

Let the College of Nursing and Health Professions tailor programs to meet the specific needs of your organization

### Registration and program information:

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