



The Synapse

A Communication Impulse

Connecting the Bethel University Nursing Department with its Alumni | Summer 2021

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

New Department: Nursing, Social Work, and Community Health

[Dr. Diane Dahl](#)

Beginning fall of 2021, Bethel joined the programs of nursing, social work, and community health to form one department entitled Nursing, Social Work, and Community Health. This department now consists of the following programs:

CAS: BSN, Social Work, Community Health

CAPS: Post-Bacc Nursing, RN to BSN

Graduate: Nurse-Midwifery, Social Work, and Doctor of Nursing Practice

We are excited to be working together as one department as well as maintaining our distinct identities. The programs in this new department have similar missions especially related to social justice and caring for those in the gaps of healthcare. Students also demonstrate similar values. Our accrediting bodies require us to prioritize interprofessional education and this direct connection will give us the opportunity to work more closely together, both faculty and students. We will be

better practitioners because we are together. COVID has slowed down this collaboration, but faculty from nursing and social work have already designed an inter-professional case study that was used this spring!

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Post-Bacc Program Continues to Thrive in 2021 Despite the Pandemic

[Cassie Clabaugh](#)

During summer semester 2020, clinicals and skills intensives were shifted to virtual experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the 18 admitted students remained excited and engaged in all virtual content! Once fall began, students were thrilled to begin in-person skills intensives and med-surg clinical experiences. Our three med-surg clinical sites, Woodwinds Hospital, St. John's Hospital, and Hennepin County Medical Center, provided our students with excellent learning and patient care opportunities.

Students are thrilled to have completed their medical-surgical clinical experiences and to learn about other areas of nursing. This spring, they moved on to maternity, pediatric, and community health experiences. It is hard to believe that our first cohort will be graduating in just two months! We are so proud of this cohort and were excited to welcome the second cohort of 24 students that started this June. Interest remains high for this program. The plan is to continue to increase enrollment as clinical sites and faculty are available.

Nurse-Midwifery Program Growing and Redesigning

Dr. Jane Wrede

The Nurse-Midwifery program has exciting changes happening within our program. True to what midwifery does best, we are growing! We added 2 new full-time faculty members to our staff. Renee Clark has been an adjunct for our program since 2017. She is a practicing CNM in Colorado but spends a good amount of time here in Minnesota as well. Dawn Dahlgren-Roemmich is also a new full-time faculty member. She too has been part of Bethel for several years as our clinical director. She brings with her a passion for rural health.

In addition to adding full-time faculty, we are planning to accept 30 students into our program for our fall 2021 start. We have had an increase in applications every year since the program started in 2014. As a result, our acceptance is quite competitive and enrollment has increased every year. Adding new nurse-midwifery students every spring is one of the highlights of our year!

Over time our nurse-midwifery program's needs and the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) Core Competencies have changed. As a result, we have been working on a comprehensive curriculum redesign. During a redesign, each course gets updated resources, videos, skills, and assignments. We use student feedback, advisory committee input, alumni surveys, ACME standards, and current practice standards to update the courses and the plans of study. The new curriculum is set to start in August of 2021.

Finally, our program is preparing for a re-accreditation through an ACME visit in the fall of 2021. As we prepare for the many changes ahead we want to thank Bethel's administration, the Nursing Department, our advisory committee, our preceptors, and our students for your never-ending support in preparing the next generation of Nurse-Midwives.

Call for 3rd Party Comments

As a recognized accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education and in accordance with ACME's policies and procedures, ACME invites interested parties to submit written third-party comments concerning the qualifications of Bethel's midwifery program which is seeking ACME accreditation. ACME provides three levels of accreditation: pre-accreditation, initial accreditation, and continued accreditation.

Third-party comments must be specific, detailed, and reference the related ACME criteria. Respondents are encouraged to review the ACME criteria for the applicable accreditation type: [ACME Criteria](#). Using the ACME *Third-Party Comments* form, we invite you to submit written comments to the ACME BOR via Angela Smith, ACME Executive Director, by email to accreditation@acnm.org or mailed to ACME at 8403 Colesville Rd., Suite 1230, Silver Spring, MD 20910.



2021 BSNA & NCF Update

BSNA and NCF have worked hard to support students and create a sense of community despite COVID-19 restrictions. During the fall semester, we hosted a combination of in-person and virtual events, and we're grateful that the spring semester was a step closer to normal.

Throughout the fall semester, BSNA sent out biweekly newsletters to the entire nursing department. These newsletters were created to support students, faculty, and staff, keep people in the loop, and provide some feel-good news stories to lighten the mood and encourage readers. One section of our newsletter, the "Healthcare Highlight," included interviews conducted with various healthcare professionals, some of whom were Bethel alum. Our goal was to make this newsletter a resource to reflect, through the devotions and news stories, and to stay connected by promoting BSNA events and interviewing new nursing faculty. Another way we used technology to stay connected was by hosting a trivia night on Zoom with prizes for the top 3 finishers. Trivia questions were centered around how well students knew their nursing skills, nursing professors, and basic anatomy and physiology.

In early September, nursing students of all ages had the opportunity to sign up to be a mentor or mentee, and in October, upperclassmen mentors were paired with their underclassmen mentees. Getting together was not always easy, but each of the pairings

was able to meet either in-person or via Zoom and were encouraged to do so often in whichever setting they felt most comfortable. The mentorship program allows not only for discussions about the nursing program itself but also for discussions about how God is working in people's lives. Several mentors start or end each meeting with prayer and check in with their mentees throughout the week. BSNA is happy to provide this connection and has seen God move in some big ways in the lives of this awesome group!

Nursing Christian Fellowship, NCF, met virtually over Zoom for times of relaxed, yet valuable, conversation on resting, finding peace, and glorifying God in all of it. We are so thankful for the technology that allowed students to encourage one another during such crazy times. In addition, the BSNA and NCF teams decided to create a virtual prayer wall for the Bethel University community to create a team of prayer warriors. We used a "leave a prayer, take a prayer" concept to encourage Bethel students and employees to pray for one another. You may "leave" a prayer request (by submitting a short form), then "take" a prayer by selecting someone's prayer from our virtual wall and lifting it up to God in prayer. As Christ-followers, we are blessed with the opportunity to connect with God through prayer. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and **be persistent in your prayers for all believers**

everywhere" (NLT). Check out the Prayer Wall website [here!](#)

BSNA had the opportunity to host several in-person events for both freshman pre-nursing students and sophomores who were recently accepted into the program. We were able to connect with freshman students sitting around a bonfire in Kresge Courtyard, offering them s'mores and time with their peers. It was a delight seeing these incoming students get excited about their future education at Bethel. BSNA also hosted an event to celebrate the sophomores who were accepted into the nursing program and started this spring. We provided free muffins and BU nursing badge reels and an opportunity for connection among this new cohort. Lastly, our team provided cookies to encourage the nursing department during midterms.

Despite wrestling with COVID-19 restrictions, the BSNA team was determined to throw our annual Christmas party for the nursing department. By following COVID-19 guidelines, we were able to accommodate this with specific room capacities and pre-packaged food. With the ups-and-downs everyone experienced this year, we focused on ways that we could help others through this event. We were able to help the Bethel Student Government make blankets that were then delivered to individuals experiencing homelessness. We also had a card-making station so that those who attended the Christmas party could write

BSNA and NCF Update - cont. on p. 4

Birth with Dignity: Mothers & Babies of Uganda

Sue Steen

While teaching Bethel nursing students in Uganda, Sue Steen and Lynn Zdechlik saw the great needs of mothers and babies in childbirth. They experienced firsthand the disparity of childbirth care between women in Uganda and women in the western world. With many years of teaching experience behind them, they decided to embark on a new teaching experience: educating Ugandan midwives and nurses on ways to prevent maternal and newborn death, as well as improving care for families who suffer a perinatal loss. As nursing professors, maternal/child health nurses, and nurse-midwife, they were burdened by the many maternal deaths and stillbirths that they witnessed in Uganda over the many years they

had been going there. The maternal mortality rate in 2017 was 375/100,000 births in Uganda compared with 19/100,000 in the USA (UNICEF).

Uganda has the **10th highest rate of stillbirth in the world** with 40,000 stillbirths occurring annually (Kiguli 2015). The enormity of the conditions surrounding birth and death became real as Steen and Zdechlik witnessed mothers dying in childbirth due to blood loss, lack of resources to evaluate and assist with hemorrhage, and inadequate care. They were also burdened by the lack of perinatal bereavement care that families received after a loss. They were concerned about the inability of a mother and family to hold their stillborn baby or have time to interact with their

BSNA and NCF Update - cont. from p. 3

a nice note of encouragement for nursing home residents. Finally, we were able to give away treats and presents to those who attended and participated in fun Christmas trivia. This event was a great way to end the year as we were able to gather face-to-face!

While this year was challenging, BSNA helped foster connections and encourage community, and that is something COVID can't take away.

baby as “seeing and holding” a deceased baby is not the standard in the country, but is currently a global standard of perinatal bereavement care.

In 2017 Steen and Zdechlik educated 350 nursing and midwifery students and nurses in five different areas of Uganda. Many nurses told them that a lack of knowledge prevented nurses from giving good high-risk perinatal care. One group of nurse leaders from a regional hospital in Mbale requested Steen and Zdechlik to continue to work with them to develop a program at their hospital that focuses on both high-risk care of moms and babies, as well as bereavement care for grieving families. Thus, Birth with Dignity was born. The mission of Birth with Dignity is to educate, support, and equip nurses and midwives of Uganda to improve care for patients and families with high-risk perinatal needs with the goal of decreasing maternal and neonatal deaths, as well as caring for families with



Lynn teaching with Mama N

Birth with Dignity - cont. on p. 5



perinatal loss. In 2019 Steen and Zdechlik returned to Uganda and again taught hundreds of nurses, midwives, and physicians about high-risk perinatal care.

Since that time, Steen and Zdechlik have been providing ongoing education, assisting with the creation of educational re-

sources, tools, documentation, and support, as well as sending supplies to this Ugandan nursing team. They Skype with the team quarterly, and it is their hope and dream to not only improve the care in this healthcare facility but to bring this teaching and improved care to rural and other regions of Uganda as well.

COVID-19 has forced Steen and Zdechlik to cancel two planned trips back to Uganda to continue this work; however, they remain undeterred. They now have plans to return to Uganda in August 2021 to continue working

with the Mbale program and expand their educational sessions and program development to other hospitals and universities throughout Uganda.

Please contact Sue Steen at s-steen@bethel.edu if you are interested in learning more about their work or would like to contribute in some way. You will also find more information and their blog at www.birthwithdignity.org.

GlobHealthAction2015,8:24011-
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/gha.v8.24011>



Team at hospital

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Bernita Missal Retires



After 18 years of serving as nursing faculty, Dr. Bernita Missal retired in spring 2020.

Bernie, as she was referred to by her colleagues and friends, had

many years of international experience as a nurse and educator in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) before coming to Bethel. Her commitment to culturally aware care and teaching, along with her flexibility and willingness to teach in multiple courses and programs, provided a valuable resource for the Nursing Department. Her colleagues appreciated her cultural awareness and a number of them enjoyed collaborative research with Bernie over the years.

Whether you were a student, staff, or faculty member you would experience Bernie's warm

acceptance, support, and gentle encouragement. Always approachable with her kind and calming spirit, she can talk to everyone and anyone. She served as chair of the Scholarship Committee for several years where her leadership was key to many successful Nursing Research & Practice Symposium events.

For those of us who were blessed to work alongside Bernie over the years, we do not doubt that she will continue to be a blessing to many in her retirement. We wish her much fun and adventure in this new chapter!

Bethel's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Fully Accredited Through 2025

We are thrilled to announce that the Doctor of Nursing Practice program has been accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#), the nationally recognized accrediting institution that ensures the quality and integrity of graduate programs in nursing.

Dual Degree Program (MBA or MASL) and DNP Gaining Traction

The Dual Degree DNP program is becoming popular among prospective DNP students looking for an advanced practice degree in leadership. In 2020, Bethel University launched a new pathway to the Doctor in Nursing Practice (DNP). This dual degree means that students are granted both a master's degree and a DNP upon graduation. Students choose coursework towards a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) or a Master's in Strategic Leadership (MASL) within the Business program's healthcare concentration on their pathway to a DNP. Some of the DNP courses count towards the master's degree, so students need to complete all the coursework to receive both degrees upon graduation.

Faculty Accomplishments

Dr. Ann Holland

Ann Holland, PhD, RN, and Jone Tiffany, DNP, RN, CNE, CHSE, ANEF, concluded a five-year research project supported by the National League for Nursing in 2020. The experimental study, which recruited participants nationwide, examined the effect of evaluator

Dr. Ann Holland - cont. on p. 7

training on inter- and intrarater reliability in high-stakes assessment in simulation. An article was published in *Nursing Education Perspectives*, the research journal of the NLN, in 2020. A second article is under review with another journal.

Holland, A. E., Tiffany, J., Blazovich, L., Bambini, D., & Schug, V. (2020). The effect of evaluator training on inter- and intrarater reliability in high-stakes assessment in simulation. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 41(4), 222-228. doi:10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000000610

Dr. Kim Meyer

Psychiatric-mental health nursing: From suffering to hope, 2nd ed., a textbook in which Dr. Meyer wrote the chapter on Personality Disorders, was selected as one of AJN's Books of the Year for 2020. Retired faculty Dr. Beth Peterson also contributed a chapter.

Meyer, K. (2020). Personality disorders. In Moller, M., & Potter, M. (Eds.), *Psychiatric mental health nursing: From suffering to hope* (2nd ed., pp. 737-766). Hoboken, NJ, Pearson Education Inc.

Link to the list of awarded books for 2020 from AJN:

https://journals.lww.com/ajnonline/Fulltext/2021/01000/Book_of_the_Year_Awards_2020.15.aspx

Dr. Kristin Sandau

Sandau, K. E., Lee, C. S.... Høglund, B., & Cowger, J. A. (2021). Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with a Left Ventricular Assist Device (QOLVAD) questionnaire: Initial psychometrics of a new instrument. *The Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, 36(2), 172-184.

Lakkireddy, D. R....Sandau, K. E... Russo, A. M. (2020). Guidance for cardiac electrophysiology during the COVID-19 pandemic from the Heart Rhythm Society COVID-19 Task Force; Electrophysiology Section of the American College of Cardiology; and the Electrocardiography and Arrhythmias Committee of the Council on Clinical Cardiology, American Heart Association. *Heart Rhythm*, 17(9), e233-e241.

Varma, N... Sandau, K. E... Varosy, P. D. (2020). HRS/EHRA/APHRS/LAHRS/ACC/AHA Worldwide Practice Update for Telehealth and Arrhythmia Monitoring During and After a Pandemic. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 76(11), 1363-1374.

Sandau, K.E., Cantillon, D., and Fink, A. (2020). Cardiac Monitoring 2020. (Invited Speaker). American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions (national conference held virtually due to COVID-19). AHA NR.CVS.NS.1479.

Sandau, K.E. (Feb., 2020). *Interpreting 12-lead ECGs*. (Invited speaker.) Allina Health Clinical Nursing Conference Cardiovascular and Critical Care. St. Paul, MN.

St. Hill, C., Bryant, R., and Sandau, K.E. (2020). *COVID-19: Masks for Staff at Allina Health*. Response Grant for Short Term Emergency Funding through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) (\$618,622)

Sandau, K.E. (Nov., 2019). *Updated Practice Standards for ECG Monitoring: Impact at the Bedside*. (Invited keynote speaker.) The 16th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Association of Cardiovascular Nursing: Tokyo, Japan.

Dr. Jane Wrede

Hoffman, S., Sidebottom, A., Wrede, J., Krieger, R., Watkins, A., Taghon, J., (2021). Association of self-administered nitrous oxide for labor analgesia with maternal and neonatal process and outcome measures. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, In Press. DOI: 10.1016/j.jogn.2020.11.002. [https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(20\)30356-7/fulltext#secsectitle0130](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(20)30356-7/fulltext#secsectitle0130)

Jensen, A., Wrede, J. (2020). Fertility awareness-based methods for family planning. *Journal of Christian Nursing*, 37(4), 212-219. DOI: 10.1097/CNJ.0000000000000758

Research Funded by Chi-at-Large Leads to New Website

In 2017, the Chi-at-Large Chapter of Sigma awarded \$1,000 to Marjorie Schaffer, PhD, RN and University Professor of Nursing Emerita at Bethel University, to conduct a qualitative study on family experiences with a relative who lives with bipolar disorder. This funding bolstered the recruitment of twenty family members who shared their stories. The Bethel University Institutional Review Board approved the study design and procedures. An article in NAMI Minnesota's *Advocate* in 2017 invited family members to share their stories about a relative living with bipolar disorder.

To make these stories available to families who aim to find well-being for a loved one living with a mental illness, Dr. Schaffer de-

veloped a new website featuring the stories of parents, partners, siblings, and adult children who have a relative living with bipolar disorder: www.familybipolarstories.com

Twenty family members who pursued well-being for their loved ones and themselves in the midst of family challenges shared their stories. They displayed courage in openly telling their story, shared insight into how they learned to accept the existence of mental illness in family life, and advocated to increase acceptance and understanding about mental illness in our broader society. To learn more about what inspired the website, read the MinnPost article on [Researcher's website presents family stories of bipolar disorder](#).

In addition, Marge has two recently published journal articles featuring the results of her research.

- Schaffer, M.A. (2021). Speaking up: How family members advocate for relatives living with a mental illness. *Community Mental Health Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-021-00775-z>
- Schaffer, M.A. (2020). Family perspectives of healthcare for relatives living with a mental illness. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.12718>

Dr. Schaffer expresses gratitude to the Chi-at-Large Chapter of Sigma and Bethel University for their contributions to this research endeavor.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Front Line in New Jersey During COVID-19

In April 2020 a call went out that healthcare workers were desperately needed to aid in the COVID-19 crisis in the front lines out east. Kristen Martins, a 2011 CAS graduate working in St. Paul, heard that call, answered with a “yes,” and signed up for an eight-week shift in New Jersey. Read her blog at <https://kristenfmartins.wordpress.com/category/new-jersey-2020/> to learn about her experiences and what it was like working on the front lines of a pandemic.

“If You’re Going to Serve People, Give It Your Best”

Dan Luthi '13 is a full-time pediatric nurse—but when he's not at the hospital, he's still hard at work volunteering his nursing skills to serve victims of natural disasters through the Red Cross. He's passionate about providing people what they need in challenging times, whether that's good healthcare or a hug. Read his story at <https://www.bethel.edu/news/articles/2021/february/dan-luthi>.

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