ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is recognized as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education
Priscila Caçola, assistant professor of kinesiology, works with a child at the Little Mavs Movement Academy, a group motor skills intervention program designed to improve the motor skills of 6- to 12-year-olds with movement and coordination difficulties. Little Mavs participate in group activities designed to improve fine and gross motor skills, focusing specifically on body coordination, balance, and manual dexterity. Contact Dr. Caçola at cacola@uta.edu to learn more.

Healing Hearts

Researchers in kinesiology and nursing are teaming up to discover new ways to improve cardiovascular health.

Achieving Excellence

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation was awarded the Center of Excellence in Nursing Education designation by the National League for Nursing.

Parting Shot

Health professionals benefit from cultural immersion in Mexico.
We’re pleased to bring you the second edition of UTA Health, the magazine of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. Inside, you’ll find stories of excellence in the classroom, in research labs, in clinical settings, and among working professionals around the globe whom we are proud to call our alumni.

Last year was simply a remarkable year for the College! The National League for Nursing named the College a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education. U.S. News & World Report ranked our nursing programs among the top in the nation, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board awarded our College a $1.8 million grant to lead a multi-institutional study of clinical experience requirements for nursing school graduates.

We were thrilled to recruit Mark Haykowsky, an expert in exercise physiology and rehabilitation medicine, to serve as the Moritz Chair of Geriatric Nursing Research. We also announced a new doctoral program in kinesiology, and this spring, we will kick off a new Moritz Speakers Series featuring sports medicine authorities highlighting the benefits of exercise on heart health.

It has been stunning to watch our overall enrollment climb to more than 19,000 students based on demand for our successful campus-based and online degree programs that now attract students from every state in the union. And it is gratifying to see that the strength of our curriculum translates into student success rates for online nursing students matching those of their campus-based peers.

Most of all, we love to hear about your adventures in the world, in the realm of health care, and in your personal lives.

Anne R. Bavier, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean, College of Nursing and Health Innovation
Helping others save lives

Beth Mancini, senior associate dean for education innovation in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, knows the importance of acting quickly when someone is suffering a heart attack.

"We were at home when my 50-year-old dad suffered sudden cardiac arrest," says Dr. Mancini. "I was 16 at the time and unable to perform CPR. I stood by him and had to wait for someone to come and help, but he didn’t survive."

A year later, her mother died after complications from cardiac surgery. Mancini says she never wants anyone else to go through what she endured and has devoted her career to helping others prevent errors and enhancing patient safety.

"That’s why Mancini, who also chairs undergraduate nursing education, played a chief role in developing the 2015 American Heart Association Guidelines Update for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care, which among other things calls for quick action on the part of bystanders. “That’s what saves lives,” Man- cini says. “A bystander can jump into action, call 911, and start CPR.”
Child’s Play

Questionnaire aids parents in evaluating household items

Kinesiology Assistant Professor Priscila Caçola is helping parents and clinicians evaluate toys, furniture, and other household items for their effectiveness in aiding motor skill development in infants.

“Parents, doctors, or other infant caregivers might ask, ‘What does a toy or a table do?’ Well, depending on the space between the couch and the coffee table, it could be the first distance that the child wants to reach,” Dr. Caçola explains. “If a toy is cranked and pops up, the child might want to go get it, which could lead the child to walking. But the challenge is the thing that stimulates that child to begin moving.”

To that end, Caçola co-developed a simple questionnaire for caregivers of infants ages 3 to 18 months that helps parents better assess such household items. Called the Affordances in the Home Environment for Motor Development-Infant Scale, or AHEMD-1S, it is now being used by physical and occupational therapists worldwide.

“When parents buy toys, they’re rarely thinking, ‘I wonder if this is going to be great for my child’s fine or gross motor skills,’” says Caçola, who also serves as director of the Department of Kinesiology’s Little Mavs Movement Academy. “However, if they look at each AHEMD-1S question and each separation of the question, they can choose the toy that are different or that offer different opportunities for their infants.”

Joining Caçola in the study, published in the Physical Therapy journal, were Carl Gabbard, Texas A&M University professor of health and kinesiology; Maria L.L. Montebeato, Universidade de Piauí (UNIMEP) professor of mathematical sciences; and Denise C.C. Santos, UNIMEP professor of physical therapy.

Getting Sound Advice

Advisors help students navigate degree options

Candice Calhoun-Butts directs the team of 35 advisors and support staff who work with current students, prospective students, and alumni looking to further their education.

The office also helps process admissions applications and handles referrals, and assists students as they prepare to graduate.

“We see online students mostly by phone and e-mail, and we refer them to our counselors,” says Candice Calhoun-Butts. “Some students have other advisors, but we’re there to help them.”

Students looking for help registering for classes or completing their degree plans can find an advisor by following one of three areas of UTA: online, honors, and vocation.

“UTA has an excellent faculty and a great staff,” Calhoun-Butts says. “I honestly feel like this is a calling for me.”

The new Ph.D. program builds upon the Department of Kinesiology’s and the Center for Healthy Living and Longevity’s existing research, educational offerings, and community outreach initiatives in health and disease.

College launches doctoral program in kinesiology

This fall, UTA will welcome doctoral students into a new kinesiology program designed to elevate the excellence of the institution’s research in physiology, movement science, healthy living, and other health science disciplines.

The new Ph.D. program builds upon the Department of Kinesiology’s and the Center for Healthy Living and Longevity’s existing research, educational offerings, and community outreach initiatives in health and disease.

It will focus on the prevention, assessment, and treatment of motor difficulties, chronic diseases, and musculoskeletal injuries across the human lifespan.

Students will specialize in one of three areas: movement and rehabilitation sciences, applied physiology, or physical education. Interdisciplinary coursework will be a fundamental element of the curriculum as well.

“UTA graduates will be educated and well positioned to thrive in research positions and faculty jobs,” says David Keller, chair of Kinesiology. “They will receive unique multidisciplinary and research experiences that directly target these health needs.”
Serving Others
Motivated by family and the dream of a better life, Ali Alrubaiee became an American and earned his nursing degree

Helping others was always a focus for Ali Alrubaiee. An interpreter for the U.S. military during Saddam Hussein’s regime, the Iraqi native worked to aid American soldiers in the Iraq War. It was during that time that his mother was diagnosed with an aggressive uterine cancer that spread into her lungs. She passed away in 2005.

Watching his mother’s health deteriorate while caring for her through that difficult time was a clarifying experience for Alrubaiee. When the U.S. Congress passed legislation that would enable Iraqi citizens who helped the military to live and work in the United States, he was one of the first 50 to make the move.

“Living under Saddam Hussein’s regime was rough,” Alrubaiee says. “When I came to the States, I learned there are a lot of opportunities and ways to be successful. I don’t ever want my family or my kids to suffer the way we did before.”

This motivation to provide a better future for himself and his family led him to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from The University of Texas at Arlington. And after completing clinical rotations in various local hospitals, he began work as a student nurse technician at the Dallas VA Medical Center, where he currently works as a graduate student nurse. When Alrubaiee graduated in December 2019, U.S. officers he worked with in Iraq were there to help him celebrate.

“Tice was the only United States representative in the top 20. Thanks to her stellar showing, she’s got a chance at landing a spot on the U.S. national team. The safety of our whole team was in his hands.”

Eventually, Alrubaiee would like to pursue an advanced practice or MSN degree at UTA. Long-term professional goals include working in an ICU or emergency department. For now, he’s content right where he is—helping others.

Going Full Throttle
Rachel Kroener works to make Paralympic team

Rachel Kroener understands what it takes to dominate. The natural athlete simply goes full throttle and doesn’t allow anything to hold her back.

“Tice was the only United States representative in the top 20. Thanks to her stellar showing, she’s got a chance at landing a spot on the U.S. national team. The safety of our whole team was in his hands.”

Rachel Kroener, a freshman exercise science major, was born with cerebral palsy but got into sports at a young age. She didn’t hit her competitive stride until she found wheelchair basketball and Paralympic track and field.

She recently represented the United States in the shot put and javelin at the International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships, held in Dubai, Qatar.

According to the 2015 rankings, Kroener is 41st in the world for women’s javelin F54, the only United States representative in the top 60. Thanks to her stellar showing, she’s got a chance at landing a spot on the U.S. track and field team for the Paralympics.

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For now, she’s content right where she is—helping others.
Researchers at the College of Nursing and Health Innovation are discovering new ways to improve cardiovascular health.

Walking on a treadmill or bounding up a flight of stairs triggers a flurry of activity in the human body’s complex cardiovascular system. When it works, it’s a marvel that we never even have to think about. The brain coordinates with the sympathetic nervous system to direct the action of blood vessels and capillaries. They provide just enough oxygen-rich blood to muscles throughout the body as the heart pumps.

When it doesn’t work, the consequences can be catastrophic. The leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States is heart disease, which can result from uncontrolled high blood pressure or hypertension. Beyond heart attacks and strokes, disease-related cardiovascular impairments also lead to a more rapid decline and death in people with conditions such as chronic kidney disease and diabetes. Cardiovascular health also has been implicated in the development of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

Pinpointing what makes the cardiovascular system falter and finding ways to intervene is the goal for researchers in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. Professors and their students are exploring a wealth of questions and targets for interventions.
Heart failure occurs when changes in the size of the heart mean it “either doesn’t receive enough blood or it doesn’t pump out enough blood,” Haykowsky says. “It leads to a cascade of events. The body tries to protect itself, but in doing so, it really becomes dysfunctional and ultimately leads to death.”

In addition to changes in the heart’s shape, exercise intolerance is a fundamental feature of heart failure. Patients experience shortness of breath and fatigue from simple activities like putting on a shirt. Obesity, high blood pressure, and a sedentary lifestyle are risk factors.

Haykowsky’s work centers on a type of heart failure that accounts for about half of the cases. It is called “heart failure with preserved ejection fraction,” or HFpEF. In those cases, heart muscles are thinned, and the heart doesn’t receive or, consequently, pump enough blood. It affects mostly older women.

Current treatments don’t improve survival in individuals with HFpEF. Haykowsky’s research is looking at whether factors beyond the heart—such as blood vessels, blood flow, and the muscles themselves—could be limiting exercise tolerance.

“We know a lot of the benefits of exercise unequivocally, but in discussed groups or people at risk for disease, we need to target our therapy. We can’t just say, ‘Exercise is exercise,’” he says.

Exploring Relationships

Dr. Fadel also focuses on patients diagnosed with disease, but not necessarily those conditions typically associated with the heart. He is exploring how an overactive sympathetic nervous system impacts the health of people with diagnoses including kidney disease and diabetes.

The sympathetic nervous system regulates blood flow and blood pressure through a system of involuntary neural cardiovascular controls.

“You’re going to be worse off in any condition with an overactive sympathetic nervous system,” says Fadel, who has earned funding from the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). “It has deleterious consequences on the heart. It increases afterload on the kidney and deleterious consequences on your blood vessels. It affects almost all systems, and when it’s hyperactive, it’s all a negative. A lot of our research is directed at trying to identify why it becomes hyperactive. Can we find the mechanism by which that occurs? The idea is to identify therapeutic targets.”

Fadel is studying how asymmetric dimethylarginine, or ADMA, a naturally produced by the body, may play a role in the overactivity of the sympathetic nervous system in chronic kidney disease patients.

His research at UTA also will explore whether an overactive sympathetic nervous system could explain limitations in the ability of blood vessels to respond to insulin properly and whether it contributes to impaired glucose uptake in type 2 diabetes patients.

Fadel said the College’s 2014 merger of nursing and kinesiology is a natural fit for patient-based research like his. “To prepare these students for that fair amount of clinical collaboration within the lab and nurses are a key part of this. I think it’s also a great environment for students to learn. Not just from the kinesiology side but from the nursing side as well,” he says.

Identifying Interventions

Heart failure, he noted, is a disease that is not curable. Instead, the goal of treatment is to slow or even stop the progression of disease.

“Unrealistic outcomes are just not going to happen. Patients are going to continue to have heart failure,” Haykowsky says.

Instead, the focus should be on prevention. “The only thing we can reasonably say is that if we can improve some of the modifiable risk factors, we can [reduce] the risk.”

To do that, Haykowsky and Fadel are working to identify those modifiable risk factors, which are discussed in a forthcoming paper. The researchers have identified a number of potential targets, including obesity and diabetes, both of which are known to contribute to heart failure.

For this reason, the researchers have targeted diabetes as a possible target for treatment. “It’s the type of thing you want to look at. It’s a modifiable risk factor,” Haykowsky says.

The researchers also are looking at other factors that may contribute to heart failure, including stress and exercise. “The two are connected,” Haykowsky says. “Exercise is a way to combat stress.”

Health care providers can do their part to help patients by offering education and support. “We have to do a better job of helping patients understand the impact of lifestyle changes,” Haykowsky says. “We need to do a better job of educating patients about what they can do to prevent heart failure.”

“Sometimes people think just eating healthy and exercising is enough. But the truth is, it’s not,” Haykowsky says. “You have to make some sacrifices and be diligent about what you’re eating and how you’re exercising.”

For more information about the University of Texas at Arlington’s Cardiovascular Physiology Laboratory, visit https://www.uta.edu/health/research/faculty/Pages/default.aspx.
Sol Seul Han is working on her BSN degree at UTA and wants to earn a Master of Science in Nursing and eventually become a nurse practitioner. “Nursing is the path I chose because of the intimacy I get to share with my patients,” she says. “I am with my patients 12 hours a day, if not more. I can really impact lives not only through medical intervention, but also through simply caring for them.”

Han chose UTA and the College of Nursing and Health Innovation because she knew it would give her the foundational knowledge she would need to meet and exceed the demands required of today’s nursing professionals.

This reputation for taking passionate students and turning them into knowledgeable and skilled professionals is precisely why the College of Nursing and Health Innovation was awarded a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education designation by the National League for Nursing (NLN) in 2015. It is one of only 21 colleges in the nation to receive the honor.

The NLN, the country’s foremost organization for nursing faculty and leaders in nursing education, noted that the College demonstrated sustained, evidence-based, and substantive innovation in the category of education, curriculum, clinical practice, faculty development, research, and leadership.

The designation means big things not only for the College, but also for students and alumni alike. 
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

of "Creating Environments that Enhance Student Learning and Professional Development." In order to qualify for the designation, the College had to meet stringent criteria covering the total student experience—from undergraduate programs through master’s- and Ph.D.-level work.

"Being named a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education shows that a very complex and very large college can be at the top of the heap, and that the quality of everything we do is provable and sustainable," says Anne Bavier, dean of the College. "Our success is a wonderful testimony to the consistent high aspirations of our faculty and staff as we work to support the learning and professional growth of the students in all of our nursing programs."

LEARNING THE ROLE

A crucial component of a student nurse’s education is role socialization, an ongoing and evolving process wherein students gain a better understanding of their personal values and how those values will fulfill professional expectations.

While much of this growth happens intrinsically as students work to complete their degrees, the College places a focus on ensuring student success through programs that support interaction among students and between students and faculty.

"The faculty knows how to push students to excellence while helping them reach their goals."

A signature program of the College is its Student Success Program. Initially implemented in 2004 to increase retention and graduation rates of nursing students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the program has expanded to include all undergraduate students and as well as hybrid models like the Veterans accelerated BSN and RN to BSN programs.

BSN program. These programs were developed to address critical workforce needs in the state while empowering students to achieve their personal goals. Other programs—like the co-op nursing education programs for BSN and RN to BSN students and the undergraduate Honors College track—are examples of how the college tailors the UTA experience to fit the individual needs of a diverse population of undergraduate nursing students.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

As the College grows, faculty continue to place educational programs within the reach of every student. This requires that all curricula be flexible, dynamic, current, and relevant.

Key efforts in this regard include the accelerated BSN and RN to BSN programs, as well as hybrid models like the Veterans BSN program. These programs were developed to address critical workforce needs in the state while empowering students to achieve their personal goals. Other programs—like the co-op nursing education programs for BSN and RN to BSN students and the undergraduate Honors College track—are examples of how the college tailors the UTA experience to fit the individual needs of a diverse population of undergraduate nursing students.
students. Unwavering attention to the student experience is evident throughout the College. At the graduate level, the strategy to utilize a strong system of support enabled the College to ramp up online programs and increase enrollment in MSN education, administration, and nurse practitioner tracks. Throughout, the College maintained scores on first-time specialty certification examinations of almost 100 percent. This spring, the College will graduate its first cohort of students in the off-campus MSN Family Nurse Practitioner program.

“We expect that our on-campus program will remain robust, and our off-campus program will continue to grow,” says Kathryn Daniel, associate chair of advanced practice nursing programs.

Another component of empowering students is the College’s strong emphasis on mentoring programs. Peer mentoring is crucial at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the graduate level, the College also offers a Ph.D. mentoring program, where Ph.D. candidates receive guidance and engage in special programming that will enable them to become nurse scientists.

COLLABORATIVE SUCCESSES

Helping students achieve their goals means collaboration must be fundamental to the way the college operates.

This fall, the College launched a partnership with the Pasadena Independent School District (ISD) and the UT Health Science Center at Houston for a school-based community health clinical rotation. Both undergraduate and graduate programs require nursing students to obtain clinical hours in a variety of rotations, including community health services. “The rotation program will provide student nurses a look at the disparity within the district that many economically disadvantaged residents face with access to health care and how it impacts the educational process,” says April Weisedel, a Pasadena ISD nurse specialist.

Over the past decade, the College has also held a cooperative agreement with the Dallas VA (Veterans Administration) Medical Center. Within the VA, student nurses receive clinical instruction from a VA staff development specialist who also is a faculty member. “Collaboration among the faculty, community partners, and students is one of our greatest sources of strength at all levels,” says Beth Man- cini, senior associate dean for education innovation.

“Strategic collaborations such as these are at the heart of everything we do.”

INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

In keeping with UTA’s model of innovation and demanding academics, faculty in the College are encouraged and supported to develop new pedagogies that create and sustain dynamic learning environments.

“The development of the College’s academic coaching model is a place where innovative program design is an outcome of pedagogical research. Both online and on-campus courses utilize the team approach, with a lead teacher who updates and maintains course materials and academic coaches who interact with cohorts of 25–30 students.”

Looking to the future, Bavier sees a college that is uniquely equipped to meet and exceed the demand for nurses throughout the state of Texas—and beyond.

“We accept the challenge of fostering and promoting a sustained educational environment that will be responsive and sensitive to the needs of the communities we serve,” she says. “We are pleased that we have been able to answer the call, and we are privileged to continue to do so.”

Laura Elizondo, an ICU nurse working at Baylor Scott & White Health, notes that the Center of Excellence in Nursing Education designation isn’t just a highlight for the College, it’s a point of pride that benefits alumni and the community as well.

“It is wonderful to hear that the UTA nursing program is continuing its tradition of excellence and distinction,” says the 2004 graduate. “Not only does it ensure that new nurses coming into the field are properly equipped and expertly educated, but it also serves as a proud background and strong recommendation to alumni nurses like myself serving all over the nation.”

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To the nth Degree
As new chief nursing officer for USMD Hospital at Arlington, Laurie Lewis is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the overall operation of nursing services. This includes perioperative services, inpatient and surgical intensive care, and the emergency department.

She also ensures regulatory compliance and patient care quality standards for all patients at USMD Hospital at Arlington.

Asked how she handles it all, Lewis laughs. “I’ve always had the mindset that I can do anything I set my mind to,” she says. “I think I’m just highly motivated. Anything I do, I do to the nth degree.”

With an associate’s degree, bachelor’s, and two master’s degrees—the latter two from UTA—Lewis certainly has the diplomas to prove it.

She’s even considering going back to UTA for another master’s degree.

“My Master’s of Nursing Administration degree has helped me tremendously in my current role,” she says. “Taking classes in finance, theory, and research were truly my first exposure in these areas. In particular, the management and leadership courses helped shape my leadership style and overall management strategies.”

Her drive, combined with her more than 22 years of clinical experience and 10 years in leadership roles, inspires the passion she feels for supporting current and future generations of nurses.

“I’m fortunate that I get to impact so many nurses just from the things we do here,” she says.

Making an Impact
Alumna heads American Association of Nurse Practitioners
Cindy Cooke remembers the day she got her acceptance letter to the RN to BSN program at UTA.

“It was also the day I found out I was pregnant,” she says. “I told my husband, ‘I don’t think I can do this,’ but he said, ‘Yes you can.’”

Thanks to his support and the support of the UTA faculty and staff, Dr. Cooke completed her degree the following year and proudly balanced her new diploma in one hand and her 6-month-old son in the other.

That was in 1978. By the time her son was entering college, Cooke was going back to school to become a nurse practitioner.

She has also earned her Doctorate of Nursing Practice and has spent the last 12 years at Fox Army Health Center in Huntsville, Ala. Last year, she was named president of the board of directors for the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

Cooke says at UTA she learned it’s possible to balance personal and professional aspirations.

“There are so many ways you can accomplish your goals, and when I was at UTA, I saw that,” she says. “Each one of us has those professional goals, and it’s good to know you can accomplish them while working around your family, your life.”

At the AANP, an Austin-based professional organization with more than 65,000 individual members and over 200 group members, Cooke works to promote excellence in nurse practitioner practice, education, and research. She also banks the organization’s efforts to advance health policy to shape the future of health care by bringing nurse practitioners’ voices to the table and working to enhance their image.

“NPs number more than 205,000 nationwide,” Cooke says. “There are so many ways you can accomplish your goals, and when I was at UTA, I saw that,” she says. “Each one of us has those professional goals, and it’s good to know you can accomplish them while working around your family, your life.”

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“There are so many ways you can accomplish your goals, and when I was at UTA, I saw that,” she says. “Each one of us has those professional goals, and it’s good to know you can accomplish them while working around your family, your life.”

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NPs number more than 205,000 nationwide,” Cooke says. “There are so many ways you can accomplish your goals, and when I was at UTA, I saw that,” she says. “Each one of us has those professional goals, and it’s good to know you can accomplish them while working around your family, your life.”

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation was well-represented at the 2015 Homecoming 5K, which honored U.S. Student Emergency Services, and at the UTA Health Expo, which featured wellness centers, food, and activities. Both events were held November 14, 2015.

Making an Impact
Alumna heads American Association of Nurse Practitioners
Cindy Cooke remembers the day she got her acceptance letter to the RN to BSN program at UTA.

“It was also the day I found out I was pregnant,” she says. “I told my husband, ‘I don’t think I can do this,’ but he said, ‘Yes you can.’”

Thanks to his support and the support of the UTA faculty and staff, Dr. Cooke completed her degree the following year and proudly balanced her new diploma in one hand and her 6-month-old son in the other.

That was in 1978. By the time her son was entering college, Cooke was going back to school to become a nurse practitioner.

She has also earned her Doctorate of Nursing Practice and has spent the last 12 years at Fox Army Health Center in Huntsville, Ala. Last year, she was named president of the board of directors for the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).

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Follow UP

Paying It Forward

Alumni honors husband with Dream Makers donation

Bryan Beazley had an undergraduate degree in nutrition but realized a career in nursing was his real goal. He thought that “I really wanted to face-to-face interaction where I could make a difference,” he says. In the summer of 2013, he started UTAs online BS program, an option that allowed him to continue working as a physical therapist aide and support his wife while she completed training to become a physical therapist.

A stellar student, he was able to win several awards, including the Joan Arickel Leadership Award and a variety of scholarships offered by the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. He graduated in December, and now he and his wife are moving to Temple, Texas, where he plans to work in the pediatric Elr and trauma unit of McLane Children’s Scott & White Healthcare.

“The feeling that brings people who have done so much good in the world back to us,” says Dr. John J. Mather, chairman of the Department of Nursing. “All of them are making a difference.”

When we were receiving, as a young family, the support and care that our son needed, says Dr. Mather, “I think our only real goal was to help our son.” Beazley’s wife, Jennifer, is now a nurse at Parkland Hospital in Dallas.

Beazley, a fighting veteran who now has four children, worked to rebuff her program. She has also dreamed of being a nurse and knew it was Tims goal to help her earn her degree. “There was never any question where she would go to school,” says, “I don’t think I anywhere else but UTA.”

She earned her degree in May 2014 and managed to pay all the bills, but we did.” she says. “With trying to pay tuition and day-to-day living expenses, it meant so much to us,” she says. “Now the money to get through your education.”

Afer one last deployment, Tim was able to pursue his longtime career goal of being a nursing student and enrolled in the College of Nursing at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Between deployments, Tim worked as a therapy aide and support his wife Sierra Leone to help fight the spread of Ebola. He is doing contract athletic training and service as a staff nurse, and gives lectures for the professions at the University of Texas at Austin.

Kaci Hickes (‘02, BSN, Nursing) was named 320 Woman of the Year last year by mtvU.com, MTV’s website for Young Adults. She spent much of 2013 working with Doctors Without Borders in impoverished areas of Burma, Sudan, and Nigeria, and she traveled to Senegal to help get the spread of ebola under control. She works for Samaritan’s Purse, which has provided disaster relief in over 100 countries.

Calvina Banks (‘98, BSN, Nursing) is director of training and development of Benchmark Hospitality International in The Woodlands, Texas. Previously she was director of training for the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. She has served in several roles of increasing responsibility for the company, including director of training and senior training manager.

Delane Bowl (‘10, BSN, Nursing) completed her masters degree in health administration at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio in May 2015.

Stephanie Campbell (‘07, BSN, Nursing) has been elected to the Texas A&M campus chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. She treats patients at the Parkland Hospital Burn Unit in Dallas, where she is a staff nurse, and lectures for the American Burn Association.

Tori Last (‘12, BSN, Nursing) received and MS in nursing education from UT Southwestern Medical Center.

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Parting SHOT

For the last 20 years, the College of Nursing and Health Innovation has taken health professionals to Cuernavaca, Mexico, to study at Universidad Internacional. Participants study Spanish and Mexican culture while also living with a Mexican family.

Guided field trips to health care facilities and local cultural sites provide a firsthand view of day-to-day life in Cuernavaca, known as “the City of Eternal Spring” because temperatures stay around 70 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. Special conferences provide information on the Mexican health care system, traditional medicine, and beliefs about health and illness.

The continuing education program is organized through the College’s Center for Hispanic Studies in Nursing and Health. Mary Lou Bond, professor emeritus and a senior advisor, says it was developed after students who participated in a similar program she led in Cuernavaca suggested it could also benefit working professionals.

This year’s program was held January 1-8 and led by Wendy Barr, adjunct clinical associate professor of nursing. It provides up to 30 contact hours offered through the Texas Nurses Association, an accredited provider of the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation. Participants included students, faculty, alumni, and fellow health care professionals.

“I am eternally enchanted with Mexico, and that definitely made this a very attractive option for me,” says Adele DiMinno, associate professor of nursing at Northern Kentucky University. “I thought the fast-paced and professionally taught courses in Spanish were top-notch, and I only wish I could have stayed longer.”

Angie Millan, director of Children’s Medical Services for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, brought along her teenage daughter, Justine, who had two years of high-school Spanish.

“The university tailors its courses to the individual and has excellent instructors who have lots of experience and enjoy what they do,” says Millan, a past president of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. “I would recommend this school to others, no matter what level you feel you are with writing, reading, or speaking Español.”

Visit uta.edu/conhi/research/chsnh/ to learn more about the vision and mission of UTA’s Center for Hispanic Studies in Nursing and Health.

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Your annual gifts help future leaders like Jaeca Flanagan, College of Nursing and Health Innovation graduate, fulfill her potential and discover her passion. Make a gift online today at giving.uta.edu or call the Office of Alumni Relations at 817-272-3274.

JAEECA FLANAGAN has big plans. First, a master’s degree in nursing. Then, a job as a nurse practitioner. She says it wouldn’t be possible without the support she received from a Dream Makers Scholarship as an undergraduate. “My scholarship has helped me bridge the financial gap between school and family. It has allowed me to devote my full attention to being a student without having to get a job. It’s important to invest in the future. We are the nurses of the future, and scholarships like these help make our dreams a reality,” she says.

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