

Bedside Notes: The Pulse of Harris College

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Table of Contents

<u>TCU Nursing Student COVID-19 Vaccination work</u>	Page 2
<u>First Ph.D. Cohort Set to Graduate</u>	Page 3
<u>Renal Disease: Demystifying disparities and increasing awareness</u>	Page 4
<u>Alumni Spotlight: Juli Iracheta</u>	Page 5
<u>The Dementia Project: Overcoming a stigma</u>	Page 6

Note from Dean Watts:

The global COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the world -- and Harris College has risen to that challenge. The roots of Harris College run deep, stretching back as far as the last global pandemic. In 1912, Dr. Charles Harris established a nursing school to educate professionals who would go on to serve the region's healthcare needs. At the turn of the 21st century, the foundation established by Dr. Harris served as the cornerstone of a new college comprised of academic units sharing an educational focus on preparing the next generation of healthcare and human services professionals. Today, the Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences is TCU's original and largest healthcare centered college. Future nurses, nurse anesthetists, speech-language pathologists, social workers, athletic trainers, educators of the deaf, physical educators, and health and fitness professionals are learning to transform global health. Our partnerships with the Fort Worth community and DFW region are strong. Alumni of our college are the professional leaders and thought leaders of their disciplines. I hope that you enjoy this newsletter, which will emphasize some of the amazing people of Harris College who are serving a critical healthcare and human services role for our community and society.



Harris College Nursing Students Embodying a Humanitarian Spirit in the Service of their Community

By: Milton Mondlane

The Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences maintains as a critical objective the transformation of global health. This ambitious challenge is met through international courses in Geneva or Beijing as well as through local efforts -- such as when faculty, staff, and students battle the COVID-19 pandemic within their surrounding communities. Sharon Canclini, an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in Harris College, has shared how faculty and students in TCU Nursing, along with community partners, are providing a service which is truly transforming the health of our community.

Professor Canclini has pursued opportunities for TCU nursing students to contribute to the public health efforts of Tarrant County and the state through the ongoing vaccination efforts in Fort Worth. She has advocated on behalf of TCU Nursing to the county Health Department to make sure local leaders are aware that Harris College is known for mass vaccinations. Since 2009, students of TCU Nursing have administered 3,000 to 35,000 doses of flu shots every year. The current COVID-19 vaccination campaign is a partnership between TCU Nursing and community partners including Tarrant County Public

Health Department, Fort Worth Fire Department, the City of Fort Worth, Baylor Scott & White, and TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine. Along with 33 TCU Nursing students, Professor Canclini and other nursing faculty are volunteering at sites which administer vaccines for up to 900 individuals each day.

Professor Canclini indicated that on some days the number of people that TCU Nursing students are impacting can be astounding. Just on the 24th of February, at the Bob Bolen Fire Training Academy, one of the nursing teams assisted in administering 1,100 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to residents of the local community. The experiences obtained by TCU Nursing students enhance their collaborative skills as they rotate around the clinics and work as staff members. While some student nurses calm individuals who are awaiting vaccinations, others serve in the role of “shooters” or vaccinators.

The challenge of flattening the COVID-19 curve will impact the students’ knowledge and skills when they enter the Nursing profession after graduation. Their efforts to demystify science to vaccine skeptics, reduce fear in surrounding communities while actively protecting the health of citizens speaks not only to the ambitious mission of Harris College but also to the caring spirit that these nurses embody in their work. “They are thoroughly wrapped around their community,” as Professor Canclini stated. As she envisioned, such real-life experiences permit TCU Nursing students to enjoy the “eureka” moment when they realize that they can make a meaningful contribution to their community as a guardian of public health.





One More Milestone for Harris College: First Ph.D. Cohort Set to Graduate

By Milton Mondlane

Faculty and staff are full of pride for the initial cohort of Ph.D. students who will be graduating in May with the first ever Doctor of Philosophy degrees awarded by the Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences. Four students who have served as trailblazers for this innovative new Ph.D. program are set to walk across the stage during spring commencement as they begin their careers as teacher-scholars. This is a major milestone for Harris College, which already contributes a large number of doctoral graduates to the university through the clinical doctorates offered through TCU Nursing and the School of Nurse Anesthesia. The new research-focused Ph.D. program is enabling Harris College to meet national and international needs for experts to teach and mentor the next generation of professionals of healthcare-related disciplines.

The Ph.D. in Health Sciences program was developed under the leadership of Dr. Debbie Rhea, currently Associate Dean for Health

Sciences who also formerly held the role of Associate Dean for Research in Harris College. The program is designed to prepare individuals for research and teaching careers in academia and industry. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum allows students to pursue an emphasis in one of the disciplines of Harris College including Communication Sciences & Disorders, Kinesiology, Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia, and Social Work. The program is also innovative in that students are allowed to create a flexible set of elective courses tied to core requirements which can allow some full-time students to complete all degree requirements within three years.

Dr. Emily Lund, current Associate Dean for Research in Harris College and Program Director for the Ph.D. program, indicated that the admissions team looks for students who would exhibit initiative to build a line of scholarship and enhance the scholarship of faculty within the college. The teacher-scholar focus of the program also provides mentored teaching experiences for every Ph.D. student so that they are prepared for future careers

in academia. By the time of May graduation, the first cohort of four students will have each been the primary instructor for at least four undergraduate courses at TCU.

The four students -- Austin Graybeal, Matt Dumican, Beth Rogers, and Zoë Thijs -- are finalizing their dissertation projects for defense, which will occur in front of their committees and invited guests in late April. Austin's research focuses on the influence of body compositions and diets on appetite. More simply, how we perceive ourselves to be hungry. Matt Dumican's work has looked into the swallowing impairment caused by Parkinson's disease and stroke. Beth Rogers' scholarship is centered on study of the reliability of nurses' clinical judgments of patients' condition in simulation labs. Finally, Zoë Thijs's research is investigating the behavioral and cognitive reactions of speakers with Parkinson's disease in situations where they are communicating with other individuals.

Dr. Lund expressed great gratitude for the Horned Frog community. She stressed how this remarkable endeavor and its success are byproducts of the larger support from TCU. Specifically, TCU's Office of Graduate Studies facilitated access for students to conferences and the resources students need to conduct lines of research. The individual academic units within the college also provided needed supports for the Ph.D. students in the form of laboratory space, funding, and mentorship. The future of the Ph.D. in Health Sciences program is bright -- and the future of the first four Ph.D. graduates is dazzling!



Demystifying Public Health Disparities and Increasing Awareness in African American Communities

By: Milton Mondlane

Kidney disease disproportionately affects African American communities. Dr. Janie Robinson and Dr. Glenda Daniels, Associate Professors of TCU Nursing, have been studying the acute severity of kidney disease in African Americans to better understand this health disparity. Their work has been profiled in multiple TCU news stories over the past two years, and they recently provided us with an update on their work.

As a hospital nurse in Louisiana, Dr. Janie Robinson noted that many African American men needed emergency hemodialysis. Hemodialysis is a process used when kidneys no longer function; it cleanses the blood of toxins and removes excess fluid using a machine that functions as an artificial kidney. She completed her Ph.D. in Nursing, with her dissertation focusing on kidney disease in African American communities. Dr. Glenda Daniels' doctoral dissertation focused on improving outcomes in the gastroenterology endoscopy setting.

Photo by Scott Murdock

Her dissertation addressed colorectal cancer screening by exploring the efficacy and tolerability of colonoscopy preparations. When they met at TCU 12 years ago, they recognized the similarities in their research objectives and decided to join forces because many individuals undergoing hemodialysis experience stomach and intestine problems.

Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels shared the alarming statistics that motivate their research. "Kidney disease is the 8th leading cause of death in America, but African Americans are diagnosed with it three times more than White Americans," Dr. Daniels indicated some factors driving this staggering disparity: socioeconomic status, lack of access, lack of knowledge, adherence to treatment, and racial implications. There is more: 37 million people in the US suffer from chronic kidney disease, over 90,000 people are on the kidney transplant waiting list, and only 7,000 people receive a kidney from living donors every year. While friends and family may be willing to

donate a kidney, they often do not match, or the potential donors are susceptible to the same diseases.

Individuals who are fortunate enough to receive a kidney transplant face another layer of socioeconomic barriers. After a kidney transplant, one has to take anti-rejection medications every day for the rest of their life to ensure the kidney's functionality. The cost of anti-rejection medications can be as much as \$1,300 a month. While the US government subsidizes kidney transplant surgeries, they cut Medicare funds for anti-rejection medications three to five years after a kidney transplant. Oftentimes, the monthly cost of anti-rejection medications is too expensive for African Americans in the lowest socioeconomic stratum. Consequently, the kidney fails because they cannot afford the medications required to maintain the kidney. Once again, they are forced to return to hemodialysis. There exists an interesting paradoxical reality: the US government pays in excess of \$70,000 per year for an individual to undergo hemodialysis but will not pay the \$15,600 cost per year for anti-rejection medications. Even more distressing is that the life expectancy for an individual on hemodialysis is approximately five to ten years. Ultimately, it is a mere delay of certain death.

Through their research, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels discovered a majority of the individuals undergoing hemodialysis received disability income through Medicare as low as \$750 monthly. This resulted in challenges related

Continued on page 5

to quality of life. Because of this finding, they realized the scope of their research needed to move beyond individuals in the critical last phase of kidney disease. They shifted their research focus from mitigation mode to prevention mode. They subsequently began exploring knowledge deficits and perceptions of health that impact kidney disease in communities of color.

A novel aspect of the work conducted by Dr. Daniels and Dr. Robinson is the creation of awareness campaigns for the African American community. Through these campaigns they emphasize that “one cannot live without kidneys.” Such awareness campaigns are imperative in the African Americans community. There is reluctance to seek out healthcare, donate kidneys or participate in research due to trust. The infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study lingers in African Americans’ minds and produces continued mistrust between communities of color and health professionals. Dr. Robinson shared a personal story from her research highlighting these trust issues: “I was wearing a lab jacket, slacks, a buttoned-down shirt, and dress shoes when I invited them [African American patients] to participate in my research. Most of them refused. So, I tried a new approach by wearing my nursing uniform and introducing myself as a nurse. This approach worked and most of the patients participated in my research study.” This was a critical lesson for their awareness campaigns. For their research to be successful, it was vital to create an environment that cultivated comfort and reflected their genuine interest in the health

disparities that affect communities of color. Fortunately, for Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels, Nursing remains the number one trusted profession because of the connection and relationships they foster with others.

Increasing knowledge through research and offering guidance to patients with kidney disease is not the endgame for Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels. Dr. Robinson recounted her husband informing her that he overheard discussions with misinformation about kidney disease while receiving a haircut at a barbershop. “You must do something about this,” Dr. Robinson recalled him saying. He knew that barbershops are quintessential community elements for African Americans where they talk freely and enjoy brotherhood. Consequently, it would be an excellent opportunity for her to share critical information in this environment, where people in the community would bring critical knowledge back to their families.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels planned to expand their research to Ghana to further study kidney disease in African communities, while they continue to empower people through education. They continue to remind individuals to ask their healthcare providers to have their blood analyzed to detect kidney disease when the healthcare provider fails to do so. They also developed two courses in the Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences which focus on health disparities in African Americans. Additionally, they presented on the topic at “Combating Racial Disparities in Health: Armoring

Ourselves in Healthy Habits,” an online event sponsored by the TCU chapter of NAACP on March 25th of this year.

The mission of Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to impact global health through equitable, accessible and inclusive education, scholarship and innovation. Through their scholarship and awareness campaigns, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Daniels are reaching out to individuals in communities to promote and improve health through providing resources, education, and research. They are nurses who positively influence the health of individuals they encounter.



Alumni Spotlight: Talking Tadpoles with Julissa Iracheta

By: Drew Brooks

In 2010, Julissa Iracheta graduated from TCU with a bachelor’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology. Then, in 2012, she graduated again with a master’s degree. Now, nine years later, she finds herself running a company she began in 2014 called Talking Tadpoles.

Continued on page 6

Talking Tadpoles is a pediatric therapy practice with locations in Fort Worth, Benbrook, Arlington, Weatherford, and Granbury, Texas. It offers services for communication, feeding, sensory, and fine motor difficulties for children between birth and 21.

Julissa's inspiration for starting Talking Tadpoles came out of her work in the DFW metroplex following her graduation from TCU. Through her work, she realized that "there was a need for quality care in areas that don't necessarily have continuity of services." Especially in areas that were historically underserved, the metroplex lacked areas for children to get the care they needed.

Starting a new business has presented many challenges to Julissa. One challenge that she has found is that she needs to remember to be a continuous learner. "I knew how to be a speech-language pathologist and I knew how to take care of my families and my patients, but I didn't necessarily know how to make that into a business," she said. The process of starting Talking Tadpoles required her to commit to learning more and educating herself in

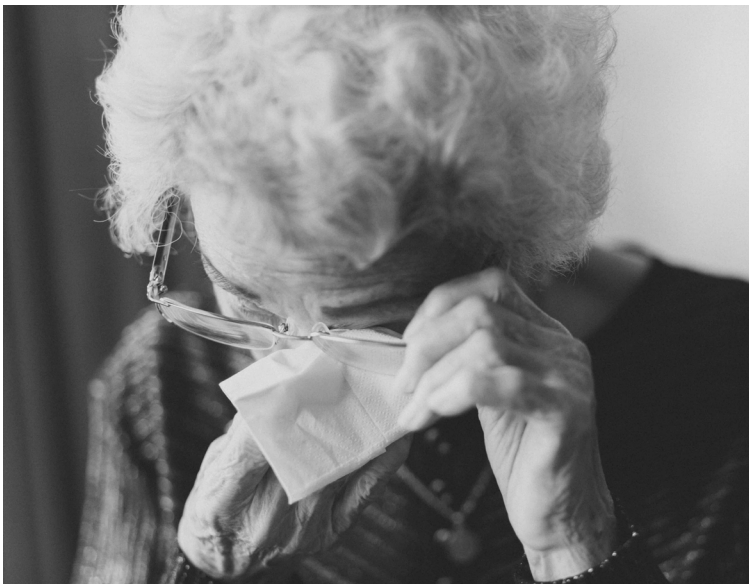
various areas outside of Speech-Language Pathology.

She says the importance to overcome her challenges lies in "trying to do new things that you may not necessarily be good at and be willing to try and fail."

As she overcame her challenges, Julissa has reaped the rewards through her business. One of the biggest rewards she's seen is the ecosystem that her business has built. It has brought together a team of people, who may not have been brought together without it, and they have come together and become like a family. "You have the community at large where you're also able to connect others to resources," she explains.

Through Talking Tadpoles, Julissa has also learned the importance of setting goals and creating ways to reach them.

One lesson that we can all learn from is one of the biggest lessons Julissa's learned, which is that "there's nothing that can replace authentic interactions." She says, "it's really important that you bring whatever that unique dash of yourself is to every interaction because people can feel if you're being authentic or if you're wearing a mask or putting on a show."



The Dementia Project: Overcoming a stigma with Dr. Michelle Kimzey

By: Drew Brooks

Each and every one of us will be affected by someone with dementia in our lifetime. Whether it be a family member or a friend, we will all know someone affected by dementia. For nursing students, it might be

a person they are treating in the community, making it crucial for us all to understand the disease.

Despite its widespread impact, dementia is surrounded by a stigma. And it's a big stigma. It comes out of a lack of empathy and understanding for people suffering from dementia. Dr. Michelle Kimzey is fighting this stigma by raising awareness through her work with TCU.

Dr. Kimzey knew she had to figure something out when she watched a family member suffer from Alzheimer's type dementia and saw the care she received -- or rather, the lack thereof. From an early stage in her life, Kimzey has always had a love for older adults and, as she and her family fought through numerous battles and unpleasant experiences, she understood change was necessary.

Kimzey came to teach at TCU in the spring of 2017 and shared her passion for dementia with the campus. The following year, she began offering an elective class on dementia. One thing that's kept her inspired is seeing her students develop a passion for learning more about dementia and forming relationships with people suffering from dementia as a result of her class.

Continued on page 7

Despite COVID-19, students in her class are still finding ways to raise awareness about dementia. One assignment has them spread awareness by gathering a group of their friends and giving presentations. Additionally, some of her students have volunteered to do online visits with dementia patients. One student advocates every Monday by playing bingo online with people living with dementia.

Through her research, Dr. Kimzey has found that online visits with people with dementia are beneficial for both parties. Students form friendships with dementia patients, and they build a family-like bond. The patients then want to know more about the students' college experience and want to be involved and even attend their graduation. This leads students to carry on that relationship through nursing school and can continue on even after graduation.

Another thing students do in Dr. Kimzey's class is go through a dementia simulation which measures their empathy. Kimzey discusses how "providing care for somebody with dementia is based on empathy and understanding." With empathy at the forefront of dementia care, it's crucial for students to gain a sense of their own empathy.

We need to understand that it's not up to the person with dementia to adapt, it's up to us. Rather than focus on what dementia has taken away from people, we need to focus on their strengths to help break the stigma.

The hospital is one of the worst places for someone with dementia to go because of the environment; people are not treated with the empathy and care that

dementia patients require. We must take steps to learn more about the disease to make sure that patients do not receive subpar care and treatment simply because of the stigma that surrounds dementia. We need to walk in the shoes of dementia patients to understand where they're coming from and understand that each and every one of them is unique.

So, while all of us are going to be affected by dementia someday, it's important to remember that people with dementia can still live a quality life. However, it's up to us to beat the stigma and raise awareness, empathy, and understanding to give them this quality life.



About the Harris College

Harris College is vibrant and thriving with innovative students, faculty, programs and curricula -- all focused on healthcare professions that make a difference for others. Programs in Harris College date back to the early history of TCU and also Fort Worth. The Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences represents the original healthcare-focused college of our university, and has educated health professionals who have gone on to impact the lives of not only people within communities but also distinguish themselves as leaders within their professions.

The academic units within Harris College -- Communication Sciences and Disorders, Kinesiology, Nurse Anesthesia, Nursing, and Social Work -- are home to more than 1,700 undergraduate and graduate students who are supported by committed and talented faculty and staff.



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