

## Welcome Messages from the New Director and Faculty



### **Dr. Toi Durham: Leading Nursing Education at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD)**

UHD is pleased to welcome Dr. Toi Durham as the new Director of the BSN Nursing program. Dr. Durham stepped into this role after Dr. Dune's retirement; Dr. Dune had been the program's Director since its inception in 2017.

Dr. Durham's nursing journey began nearly three decades ago. She started as a Licensed Vocational Nurse after graduating from a Community College, followed by obtaining her associate degree in nursing. Her pursuit of knowledge led her to a master's degree with a focus on Nursing Leadership, Administration, and Nurse Education. Later, she earned her Doctoral degree (DNP), driven by a desire to serve and represent nursing more extensively. Additionally, as a lifelong learner, Dr. Durham's passion for helping those with mental illness led her to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. Throughout her career, she has held various academic positions at institutions such as San Jacinto College, Houston Christian University, and the University of Texas Medical Branch. Her expertise extends to curriculum development, and she has been a subject matter expert for both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses.

Dr. Durham's service in nursing spans diverse areas, including Mental Health, Population Health, Public Health, Forensic Nursing, Travel Nursing, Infection Control, Foreign Travel, Managed Care, and Academia. Her commitment to student learning involves leveraging emerging technologies and fostering innovation in teaching-learner collaboration in such a dynamic healthcare arena.

As a nurse educator, Dr. Durham believes it is a responsibility and an honor to shape healthcare outcomes by preparing future nurses to deliver safe, high-quality care. As we mentor and guide our future nurses, we ultimately contribute to optimal patient outcomes and advancement in healthcare.



### **Dr. Tonye Cox-Miller: Facilitating Nursing Education at UHD**

Dr. Cox-Miller joined UHD as an Adjunct Faculty in the Nursing Program in August of 2023 and became a Lecturer in December 2023. Dr. Cox-Miller has been a registered nurse for over 30 years. She obtained her Associate Degree in Nursing (1993), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (1997), Master of Science in Nursing (2006) with a major in Administration in Community and Healthcare Systems and minors in Nursing Informatics and Teaching in Nursing, Executive Master of Business Administration (2010), and her Doctor of Nursing Practice (2015).

Throughout Dr. Cox-Miller's nursing career, she has held various leadership and management positions within healthcare and academic settings. Within healthcare and academic settings, she has been the Administrator, Director of Nursing, Assistant Director, Associate Director of Clinical Nursing, Project Director of Clinical Operations, Program Director of Graduate Leadership and Educator Nursing Programs, Nursing Education

Coordinator, and Assistant Nurse Manager.

Dr. Cox-Miller has also held the various academic positions of DNP Project Chair, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Adjunct Nursing Faculty at institutions such as St. Phillip's College, Houston Christian University (formerly Houston Baptist University), Chamberlain University, Capella University, Grand Canyon University, and Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Her expertise encompasses curriculum development as a subject matter expert, didactic, clinical, simulation, and lab instruction for undergraduate and graduate nursing courses.

Dr. Cox-Miller's teaching philosophy is one of mentor, facilitator of knowledge, and service to students. It is highly influenced by the educational foundation, healthcare employment environments, and the academic settings where I have been faculty, a clinical coach, preceptor, mentor, and facilitator of learning for nursing students at various levels.

"I am passionate about the profession of nursing and facilitating new knowledge for professional nursing practice. Upon entering nursing as a second career in 1993, I realized that I would have to be a lifelong learner to maintain competence and serve as a professional role model. I focused my nursing practice on leadership and education. When instructing nursing students in various nursing courses, I assist them in the development of critical thinking skills for effective problem-solving. I draw from my professional nursing experience and incorporate evidence-based practice, Socratic questioning, case studies, role play, and students' real-life experiences to stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving and facilitate their learning."

# PROGRAM UPDATES

UHD is excited to announce its pilot collaboration with Capital Idea Houston. Capital Idea Houston has chosen UHD's RN to BSN program to offer support to its first Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students, paving the way for a brighter future. By meeting specific criteria, Capital Idea fully funds education and training, providing essential guidance for our RN to BSN students. This initiative is crucial in addressing the nursing shortage and aligns with UHD's mission of "nurturing talent, advancing knowledge, and promoting socioeconomic mobility for a just and sustainable future."



The nursing pinning ceremony is a time-honored tradition that dates to the 12th century. It symbolically welcomes newly graduated or soon-to-be graduated nurses into the nursing profession. The tradition of pinning dates back over 1,000 years to the Crusades. During this period, those who cared for the injured and ill were given large Maltese crosses to wear on the battlefields. Florence Nightingale's impact on healthcare further influenced the modern-day nursing school pinning ceremonies. Hospitals began creating pinning programs in the mid-1880s, recognizing exceptional nurses. By 1916, pinning ceremonies were common in the U.S. and England. The pinning ceremony celebrates graduates' completion of nursing school. It signifies their transition into the nursing profession and membership in a proud and loyal society of nurses. Various symbols are associated with the ceremony: A nursing pin, a cap, a lamp, and a pledge. The pinning ceremony typically occurs separately from graduation. It involves new nursing graduates, their families, faculty

members, and representatives from the school of nursing. Each of our graduates received a pin, unique to UHD representing their achievement and commitment to nursing. Congratulations to UHD RN-BSN Nursing Fall 23 and Spring 24 graduates! We wish you all success as you embark on your rewarding nursing careers!

At the close of the academic year, the College of Science and Technology proudly recognizes exceptional student accomplishments. Among these remarkable individuals, Alyanna Marie Dipasupil stands out as the Outstanding RN to BSN Student. Alyanna's dedication to nursing and her vision for shaping the future of healthcare drive her journey. She embraces lifelong learning, continually enhancing her skills to provide competent care for patients. Her commitment extends beyond clinical experience; she aspires to educate and inspire the next generation of nurses. During her pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree, Alyanna maintained an impressive 4.0 GPA. Beyond academics, she actively engaged in collaborative learning and promoted health awareness within the UHD community. As a campus mentor, she generously dedicated her time to fostering a supportive environment. Congratulations, Alyanna! We celebrate your achievements and wish you the very best on your journey!



As we look forward to growing our campus, community presence, and student engagement among our UHD RN to BSN program, we have created a campus group "Gator Nurses on the Horizon" group! We're thrilled to have you join our community of nursing students. Whether you're just starting your journey or are well into your program, this group is here to support you every step of the way. Gator Nurses on the Horizontal is a platform designed to connect nursing students like you. It's a space where you can share experiences, ask questions, and stay informed about all things nursing-related. Whether you're seeking advice, looking for study buddies, or simply want to chat with fellow students, this group is your go-to resource. [https://uhd.campusgroups.com/GNH/club\\_signup](https://uhd.campusgroups.com/GNH/club_signup)

# PROGRAM UPDATES

UHD now offers the HESI Admission exam in the testing center! The HESI exam is an entrance exam required for many nursing programs. It's a predictor of nursing student success, and many schools use the exam as part of their admissions criteria for acceptance. Not all colleges and universities use HESI, they may use the TEAS. The HESI A2 (Admissions Exam) assesses various subjects, including reading, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, math, biology, anatomy and physiology, physics, and chemistry. To schedule your exam, you can click on the HESI link on the UHD Nursing page: <https://www.uhd.edu/academics/sciences/nursing/index.aspx> or <https://www2.registerblast.com/uhd/Exam/List>

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Congratulations to the RN to BSN program campus transition, we now have relocated to the UHD downtown campus 100% for your educational journey! Effective August 21, 2023, the UHD RN to BSN completion program has relocated! The BSN program, designed for associate degree nursing graduates with valid registered nursing licenses, has been moved to the University's main campus at 1 Main Street in Houston, Texas. This new location is approximately five miles away from Houston's world-renowned Medical Center. The BSN Degree at UHD offers students a strong educational foundation in nursing, while also providing them with the leadership and critical thinking skills necessary for a challenging career in any healthcare setting, or in the pursuit of a graduate degree. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in undergraduate research as part of their educational experience. The mission of the RN-BSN Program is to advance registered nurses, who are already competent and caring, to meet the population-focused healthcare needs of the community for a sustainable future. The professional program graduates from UHD will be able to practice within complex healthcare systems exemplifying the roles of a) member of a profession, b) provider of patient-centered care, c) patient safety advocate, and d) member of the healthcare team. The RN-BSN program aspires to be the provider of baccalaureate-prepared nurses within a diverse downtown community to address the needs and enrich the lived experience of populations in the greater Houston area through leadership and scholarship, address pervasive inequities in health care, enhance the civic readiness and engagement potential of nursing students who will be in positions of leadership.

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Dr. Song Ge received the 2023 UHD Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activity Award. Dr. Ge pioneers research on aging care and contributes to new perspectives, understanding, and approaches to protecting older adults' overall health through behavioral modifications and better nursing care. This is particularly important as the U.S. population is aging rapidly. Since joining UHD in September 2018, Dr. Ge has actively engaged in extensive scholarship activities, published over 30 publications, and involved over 20 UHD students. Google Scholar showed an h-index of 13 and 670+ citations of her work, which is indicative of the influences of her research. All papers were published in rigorous peer-reviewed health science journals. Students participated in eight papers to learn the publication process of authorship, including submission, critique, revision, and response to reviewers' comments.

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Dr. Charlet Jose received the DAISY Faculty Award. The DAISY Faculty Award for Nursing Faculty was first introduced in 2010, inspired by a Dean of Nursing who reminded DAISY's founders, the Barnes family, that Patrick's nurses were educated and inspired by excellent nursing faculty. This realization prompted the family to create a program honoring nursing faculty to recognize and celebrate the contributions faculty make to the future of nursing. Exceptionally skilled and compassionate nursing educators play a pivotal role in shaping the nursing workforce and setting an example for future nurses. Society relies on these educators to impart the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for nurses to provide compassionate and complex care. Nurse educators inspire their students and prepare them for the ever-changing landscape of nursing practice that helps nurses practice across a broader, more complex, and ever-changing continuum. Recognizing their impact not only boosts faculty morale but also contributes to a healthy work and learning environment. Dr. Jose received the DAISY Award for her significant impact on her students' success in her class, which has positively influenced their nursing education journey. Additionally, her efforts have contributed to an increase in the students' NCLEX pass rate.



# PROGRAM UPDATES



The RN-BSN program has formed partnership with Baylor and the UHD Wellness center. Nursing students are actively engaging in health promotion through organizing and participating in health fairs at the UHD Wellness Center. These events provide a vibrant platform for students to educate their peers and the community on various health topics, ranging from nutrition and physical fitness to mental health and disease prevention. By setting up interactive booths, conducting workshops, and offering health screenings, the students not only disseminate valuable health information but also gain practical experience in public health advocacy. These initiatives foster a collaborative environment where students can develop their communication and leadership skills while contributing to the overall well-being of the UHD community. We would like to especially thank Dr. Beatriz Sweeney, Assistant Professor (BCM), STEM Specialist at Baylor College of Medicine Academy at Ryan and Dr. Lisa Joyner, Vice President, UHD Student Success and Student Life (3SL/ Wellness Center).



Dr. Durham and Dr. Cox-Miller participated in the MD Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC) College Fair held on Wednesday, March 27, 2024. We were excited to speak with potential nursing students who were interested in continuing their nursing education to obtain their Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree. MDACC is among about 20 hospitals nationwide that have earned five consecutive Magnet designations (the golden standard in nursing). We were informed that MDACC was up for their sixth Magnet reaccreditation and there was a push for Associate Degree registered nurses in their employ to obtain their BSN degree.

During our attendance at the MDACC College Fair, we also had the opportunity to reconnect with professional colleagues and MDACC nurses who were previous nursing students that Dr. Cox-Miller taught. It was a great experience!



# PROGRAM UPDATES

In March, our Director of Nursing proudly represented the UHD and nursing professionals across Texas at “The Meeting Place for Chief Academic Nursing Officers.” This annual gathering brings together primary deans and directors from member schools to engage with peers and thought leaders. The event focuses on the latest data, innovations, and strategies related to policy, leadership, higher education, and workforce issues.

During the conference, Dr. Durham and a select group of directors participated in Capitol Hill Day. Their mission? To advocate for key issues impacting academic nursing. They met with congressional staff and engaged with state delegations, emphasizing the unique nursing education pathways at their respective institutions. Dr. Durham was able to highlight the distinct pathways that empower nurses to advance their careers at UHD offers healthcare excellence. The highlight of Capital Hill days was discussing with key constituents the importance of nursing education and the critical role of academic progression in supporting nurses, patients, and communities. The three focus areas and congressional requests were: 1. Supporting Increased Title VIII and National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) Funding in Fiscal Year: We advocate for increased funding for Title VIII and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). This funding boost is crucial to creating more opportunities within the nursing profession, supporting nursing students, and increasing the number of nurses ready to serve in diverse settings, including rural, urban, and underserved communities. 2. Investing in Nursing Education: Cosponsor and Pass the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act (S.3770/H.R.7266): We urge cosponsorship and passage of the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act (S.3770/H.R.7266). This legislation emphasizes investment in nursing education pathways at the baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate levels. Immediate infrastructure support is essential to meet future workforce demands effectively. 3. Supporting Sustainable, Inclusive, and Innovative Higher Education Policy: Invest in Nursing Education Pathways and Academic Progression: We advocate for sustained and preserved federal student loan programs. Investing in nursing education pathways and academic progression is vital for providing high-quality healthcare across all communities. Higher education plays a critical role in the success of nursing students, their families, communities, the economy, and the health of our nation’s patients. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics about 193,100 job openings for registered nurses and 29,200 job openings for most APRNs are projected every year, on average, for the next decade. UHD remains committed to shaping the future of nursing through education, advocacy, and collaboration. As we continue to champion academic progression, we recognize its impact on nurses, patients, and the broader community.



# FACULTY PUBLICATIONS IN 2023



1. Zhou, T., Qu, Z., **Ge, S.**, Wu, X., Zhang, X., Wang, A., & Tang, X. (2023). Frailty knowledge level and its influencing factors among older adults in China. *Geriatric Nursing*, 50, 247-254.

2. Li, C., **Ge, S.**, Yin Y., Tian, C., Mei, Y., & Han, P. (2023). Frailty is associated with worse cognitive functioning in older adults. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 14:1108902.doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2023.1108902

3. Zhu, X., **Ge, S.**, Dune L., Yang, C., Tian, C., & Wang, Y. (2023). Tui Na for painful peripheral neuropathy in people with human immunodeficiency virus: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial protocol. *Frontiers in Neurology*. 14:1113834.doi: 10.3389/fneur.2023.1113834

4. **Ge, S.**, Yang, C., Qu, Z., Lin, X., Liu, M., & Wang, Y. (2023). Association between seropositivity for toxocariasis and cognitive functioning in older adults: an analysis of cross-sectional data from the US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), 2011–2014. *BMJ Open*, 13(3), e068974. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2022-068974

6. Liu, K., Peng, W., **Ge, S.**, Li, C., Zheng, Y., Huang, X., & Liu, M. Longitudinal Associations of Concurrent Falls and Fear of Falling with Functional Limitations Differ by Living Alone or Not. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 836.

7. Xiang, D., Zhang, Z. X., **Ge, S.**, Wang, W., Lin, B. L., Chen, S. Y., ... & Mei, Y. X. (2023). Physio-psycho-social interaction mechanism in dyadic health of young and middle-aged stroke survivors and their spousal caregivers: a longitudinal observational study protocol. *BMJ open*, 13(4), e065767.

8. Ye, L., Tang, X., Zhang, H., **Ge, S.**, Yin, L., Zhou, Y., & Chang, J. Prevalence and risk factors of pre-frailty and frailty in maintenance haemodialysis patients in China: A cross-sectional Study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*.

9. **Ge, S.**, Ma, W., Qu, Z., Zhu, X., Chen, Z., Lin, X., & Fu, Z. (2023). Urinary tobacco-specific nitrosamine 4-(methylnitrosamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanol (NNAL) and cognitive functioning in older adults: The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2013-2014. *Tobacco Induced Diseases*, 21, 68. <https://doi.org/10.18332/tid/162368>

10. Lin, X., Zhao, J., **Ge, S.**, Lu, H., Xiong, Q., Guo, X., Li, L., He, S., Wang, J., Peng, F., Fan, Y., Zuo, X., Tian, C., & Ying, C. (2023). Dietary Polyphenol Intake and Risk of Hypertension: An 18-y Nationwide Cohort Study in China. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, S0002-9165(23)48894-6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajcnut.2023.05.001>

11. Wang, S., Wang, M., Leung, I. S. H., **Ge, S.**, Xu, X., Chen, S., & Yin, Y. (2023). The association of cognitive frailty and the risk of falls among older adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International journal of nursing practice*, 29(4), e13181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijn.13181>

12. Chen, H., Wang, Y., Zhang, M., Wang, N., **Ge, S.**, & Liu, Y. (2023). Effectiveness of Tai Chi on cognitive function among older adults with mild cognitive impairment: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Aging & mental health*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2023.2253183>