



Sharon Gavin Fought, Dean

Welcome to 2021! Our students, faculty and staff are working hard and creatively in this COVID-19 era. I applaud their persistence and know these efforts contribute to the health of our region. Note, too, that we have posted our search for someone who will both teach and coordinate clinical placements. Visit <https://apply.interfolio.com/81795> for additional information. Stay well!

## SNHCL Alumni and Student News

**Rebecca Austin, BSN '20**, recently co-founded [Live Well RN](#), a medical consultation business meant to assist families seeking medical care. Along with a fellow RN and business partner, Rebecca aims to bridge the gap between physician and patient by providing support and education, and empowering patients to navigate the healthcare system and receive appropriate care. Rebecca was driven to found this business based on her experience arranging medical care for her mother. Rebecca recognized that she “had lots of nursing knowledge and lingo [and] spoke their language,” which resulted in better care for her mother. This led her to realize that other patients and their families don’t receive that level of support “simply because they don’t have a nurse in their corner.” This realization inspired the mission of Live Well RN. Visit the Live Well RN website for a link to an instructional video and opportunity to join a mailing list for future updates.

**Donna J. Biederman, BSN '04 and MN '06 alum**, participated in a celebration of the [International Year of the Nurse and Midwife](#) hosted by the [Duke University School of Nursing and the Nurse-Family Partnership](#). This involved a virtual panel discussion in December, entitled “Supporting Healthy Communities through Public Health Nursing.”

Donna is an Associate Clinical Professor at Duke University School of Nursing (DUSON), Director of the DUSON Community Health Improvement Partnership Program (D-CHIPP) and Associate Professor Track IV – Duke Dept. of Family Medicine and Community Health. An Interdisciplinary Research Leader, she is involved in the national leadership program supported by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) to equip teams of researchers and on-the-ground change agents with advanced leadership skills. The program emphasizes health and equity and the application of research and policy to meet the pressing needs of communities.



Donna Biederman

Donna’s work focuses on supporting individuals experiencing homelessness and chronic health conditions, medical respite for homeless individuals, and increasing housing stability.

And, in November, she got a tractor. Donna says, “[it] is certainly one of the highlights of my year!”

*Contribution by Dr. Janet Primomo*

## SNHCL Alumni and Student News Continued



Heidi Bircher, MN '05

**Heidi Bircher, MN '05**, finished her Doctor of Nursing Practice at Chamberlain University College of Nursing. She completed her Family Nurse Practitioner at Medical University of South Carolina in 2008. Dr. Bircher is currently a Hospitalist Nurse Practitioner at Salem Health in Salem, Oregon. She was a Captain in the Army (active duty in 2011-2014) and served as a FNP at Fort Gordon/DDEAMC GA, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for a few years, then active reserves as a Major 2017-2020 with the 1984th USAH in Honolulu Hawaii.

*Contribution by Dr. Janet Primomo*

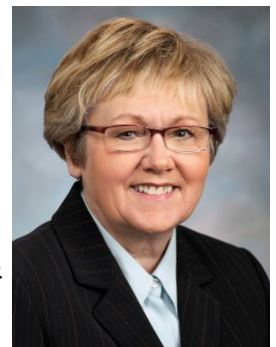
**ASUWT President and Healthcare Leadership student Vincent Da** is featured in the National First Generation Celebration, produced by [UW Tacoma's First Generation Initiatives](#). See an [archived video of the event here](#). Vincent appears starting around the 47 minute mark.

**Nikki Graham, MN '13**, is entering a DNP program at American Sentinel. Nikki says, "I am fortunate to be a Director of Nursing Excellence with oversight of Nursing Professional Development, Magnet Program Director, Student Services, Nursing Research and Nursing Professional Governance and Practice. It keeps me busy and is a complete joy. This year I was able to 'take' my whole team to the ANPD conference and serve on the 2021 ANPD Conference Committee. My degree from the UW has opened up a wonderful career and I will always be truly grateful."

**Yvonne King-Kee, BA '19**, recently accepted an Executive Director position with Brookdale Senior Living. In this role she oversees the entire function of an assisted living facility, including nursing, dining services, maintenance, and sales.

**Dawn Morrell, BSN '95** and former Washington State Representative, joined current Representative Eileen Cody, RN (34<sup>th</sup> District) and former legislator Tami Green, RN (28<sup>th</sup> District) as part of the [UW School of Nursing "Nightingale Challenge Leadership Series"](#) on October 15, 2020. They discussed their leadership experiences in the Washington State Legislature and how nurses can effectively engage with legislators to improve support for nursing and health care.

Dawn served as a member of the Washington House of Representatives from the 25th Legislative District from 2003-2011, and 2013-2015. She was the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services in the State House of Representatives and on the Appropriations, Health Care & Wellness, and Technology & Economic Development Committees. During her time in the Legislature, Dawn also served as both Majority Caucus Chair and Deputy Majority Whip in the State House. Dawn continues to work as a certified critical care Registered Nurse at MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, where she has worked since 1984.



Dawn Morrell, BSN '95

*Contribution by Dr. Janet Primomo*

## SNHCL Alumni and Student News Continued

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In January, **Jason Muncy, BA '19**, joined Madigan Army Medical Center as a health educator and researcher. As a health educator, he and his team will conduct a study on STI prevention on Joint-Base Lewis McCord, as well as leading discussion groups with soldiers.

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After graduating, **Ayub Nur, BA '15**, worked as a patient access representative at Kaiser Permanente and as a unit coordinator at Seattle Children's Hospital. He is currently in the Physician Assistant program through the Southern California University of Health Sciences.

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This January, Healthcare Leadership student **Veronica Ramirez Ramsay** [received a fellowship from the UW Latino Center for Health Student Scholars](#). In addition to attending the BA program, Veronica works at the [Downtown Emergency Service Center \(DESC\)](#), a non-profit agency based in Seattle that provides services for the homeless population. In her statement accepting the fellowship Veronica said, "As a Latina of color and an aspiring healthcare leader, my long-term career goal is to improve health amongst the Latinx community through advocacy, policy, and activism." She went on to describe work she has done advocating for Latinx people in healthcare and translating materials in Spanish for clients who are undocumented. As a COPE Health Scholar at Swedish Hospital, Veronica is able to improve the patient experience in a hospital setting by assisting with basic care for patients. As a fellow of Centro Latino's Institute of Public Policy, Training & Education, she has been able to develop the tools to create change in her community. Veronica stated, "I have gained hands-on training in community organizing, leadership development, civic engagement, and policy advocacy." An advocacy effort she participates in is urging lawmakers to include the artwork of Dolores Huerta in the Washington State Capitol building. Huerta is a labor leader, civil rights activist, and alongside César Chávez, co-founder of the National Farmworkers Association (now United Farm Workers).

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**Jan Runbeck, MN '06**, alum and clinical faculty, is quoted in a [column on The News Tribune website](#) about safe parking for those living in their vehicles. In an email to Dr. Primomo, Jan stated, "who knew that asking for folks to be able to stay in their cars would actually be the healthier option in helping to mitigate the poor outcomes of living homeless? That is how bad our reality is in these very tough times."

*Contribution by Dr. Janet Primomo*

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**Marcia Statz, MN '98**, wrote to let her fellow alumni know that she will be retiring in June of 2021. Marcia started her nursing career working for Harborview Medical Center in 1986, and in 1993 began to work part-time as a school nurse for the South Whidbey School District. In 1996 she started her MN program at UW Tacoma. Eventually she became a full time school nurse and in 2012 was recognized as School Nurse of the Year by the [School Nurse Organization of Washington](#).

## Faculty Activity

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At the [2020 Washington State Public Health Association \(WSPHA\) annual conference](#), **Assistant Professor Uba Backonja's** research team presented a website they are developing to identify and address health disparities in rural communities across Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. This site is a no-cost, practical tool for helping small, rural health departments address health equity and reduce health disparities. With input from public health practitioners, they are developing the dashboard to gather and visualize local and national data concerning public health issues like opioids and mental health. The tool will include vetted trainings on data analysis, data visualization, and health disparities. The website will launch in late summer 2021. To learn more, [visit the project information page](#).

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The [National Council of State Boards of Nursing Center for Regulatory Excellence](#) has awarded **Associate Professor Katie Haerling** funding for the study "Responding to a critical and urgent need: Informing evidence-based regulation of simulation in pre-licensure registered nursing education." The aims of the study are to 1) Compare the effectiveness of the three types of experiential learning activities (traditional clinical experience, mannequin-based simulation, and virtual simulation); 2) Examine how each type of experiential learning activity informs pre-licensure registered nursing students' clinical judgements; and 3) Conduct a cost-utility analysis comparing traditional clinical, mannequin-based simulation, and virtual simulation. This study will inform evidence-based decision-making around the extent to which simulation can effectively replace traditional clinical experiences and the most appropriate ratio for counting simulation towards required clinical hours for pre-licensure registered nursing education programs.

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**Associate Professor Susan Johnson** is currently on sabbatical. Dr. Johnson said: "During my sabbatical, I am participating in an 11-month [Applied Compassion Training Program out of Stanford](#). As part of the program, we are required to create a capstone project, and I am planning on developing a training program for staff nurses, nursing leadership and nursing educators around compassion as a way to alleviate burnout, moral distress and incivility."

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**Assistant Professor Sharon Laing** contributed to [2020: The Course](#). Developed by UW Undergraduate Academic Affairs and lead by vice provost and dean of UAA, Dr. Ed Taylor, the course is designed to "[connect] students to some of the UW's top public scholars" and discuss the challenges facing students in a most difficult year. Dr. Laing's presentation is titled [Dual Pandemics: Finding Pathways to Heal and Repair](#) and in it she describes how structural racism contributes to the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color. She also relates the topic to her research on the use of mobile health technology to improve health outcomes in low-resourced communities. In addition, Dr. Laing participated in a concluding panel presentation for the course titled [Remembering 2020: A UW Time Capsule](#). Beyond the items linked to above, the [Seattle Times also profiled 2020: The Course](#), including quotes from a correspondence between Dr. Laing and a student who expressed their appreciation for her presentation.

Additionally, Dr. Laing and UW School of Nursing faculty Dr. Wendy Barrington hosted a webinar for the Rainier Olympic Nurses Association in January. The title was "[Racism, Social Determinants of Health & COVID-19 Webinars](#)" and included PowerPoint presentations by both faculty.

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**Dr. Anne Mulligan** is joining us this academic year as faculty. She completed certification in Online Teaching through Quality Matters this fall. Dr. Mulligan is teaching a graduate course in organizational and systems leadership, an undergraduate communication course, and a lower division course in human biology.

## Faculty Activity Continued

**Associate Professor David Reyes** presented at the [UW de Tornyay Center's IGNITE AGING symposium](#) on October 2, 2020. Speakers addressed healthy aging research from a community perspective, specifically population health research. Dr. Reyes gave a presentation titled "Engaging Asian Elders to Envision a Healthier Food Environment in East Tacoma." In it, he described some of the root causes of health equity and health disparities. He spoke about his community based participatory research that focuses on equitable relationships with diverse communities to improve health outcomes.

Also at the event, Director of Public Health for Seattle and King County and **UW Tacoma Clinical Faculty Patty Hayes** gave a presentation titled "Reducing COVID-19 Risks for Older Adults in the Community and in Facilities."

In addition, following up from our spring newsletter, [Dr. Reyes was formally awarded a Distinguished Community Engagement Award on January 22, 2021](#). He was nominated and awarded for his use of community-based participatory research to identify community priorities that translate into livable and actionable changes, particularly in East Tacoma. A video of the ceremony will be posted on the [UW Tacoma Office of Community Partnerships website](#).

*Contribution by Dr. Janet Primomo*

**Associate Professor Christine Stevens** joined [the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities \(USU\)](#) on a new initiative titled "Dismantling Institutional Racism." USU is a network of public urban research universities that represents every region of the USA. Her action workgroup focus will be "Thriving Students: Addressing students' needs, assets, and opportunities for equitable outcomes."

Additionally, Dr. Stevens was invited to speak to Duke University students about disparities in food security and how to develop programs that address cultural and equitable practices.

In December, **Assistant Professor Weichao Yuwen** and her team received an award from the [UW's CoMotion Innovation Gap Fund](#). This provides further funding for the development of the CocoBot tool. CocoBot will be an on-demand and empathetic support platform for family caregivers. Learn more about the platform at <https://cocobot.care/>

### Recent Faculty Publications

**Robin Evans-Agnew** and co-authors: "[Measuring Our Success in Teaching Latinos about Asthma and Home Environments: Lessons Learned from an Intervention Developed through Photovoice](#)" in *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, DOI: 10.1353/cpr.2020.0043

**Robin Evans-Agnew and Jane Cornman**: "Innovating Nursing Education: Regional Community of Practice Aims to Advance Resilience in Nursing Students" in Washington Center for Nursing's quarterly newsletter, Q4 2020, page 6. [Link to PDF](#)

**Uba Backonja** and co-authors: "[#Menopause on Instagram: a mixed-methods study](#)" in *Menopause*, DOI: 10.1097/GME.0000000000001713

**Weichao Yuwen** and co-authors: "[Understanding preparation for preterm infant discharge from parents' and healthcare providers' perspectives: Challenges and opportunities](#)" in *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, DOI: 10.1111/jan.14676

**Weichao Yuwen** and co-authors: "[Exploring readiness for implementing best practices: A mixed methods study](#)" in *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, DOI: 10.1111/jep.13520

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