Bring Diversity to Nursing (BDN) has completed our second year of our 3 year HRSA grant project, which built on the goals of our first grant to recruit, retain and graduate diverse students from Lowell and Lawrence to become RNs and work in communities where they can impact health disparities of minority populations while adding a new Leadership Academy for our students. Since the BDN project began we have graduated 50 students with Baccalaureate degrees in nursing. To celebrate this milestone we will be hosting a BDN reunion in November 2014. See page 5 for details of the upcoming reunion and hopefully see yourself in one of the BDN pictures taken over the years.

Leadership has been an important focus for the juniors and seniors in BDN. Our students are not only succeeding in nursing but also impacting the whole UMass Lowell campus. Our graduating seniors held more leadership positions and were part of more diverse campus honor societies than in any past year.

Djwan Scott, a UML graduate and the Diversity Support Services coordinator (DSSC) is coming back to campus as a student herself this fall. Djwan will be part of the doctoral program and working to complete her DNP. You can read more about Djwan on page 3.

Another former BDN DSSC, Patricia Walker is on the Advisory Board for the UMass Lowell SON. Pat has been chosen to receive the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association Excellence In Clinical Practice national award. You can read more about Pat on page 2.

Pat was a recent guest leadership speaker at the BDN Leadership Breakfast series. Students were impressed by her as they were with our other outstanding Minority Nurse Leader speakers.

Please consider sharing your stories as working nurses. We would love to share them with other BDN alumni and BDN students.

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Bring Diversity to Nursing News

Check out what’s been happening!

Where can I find Bring Diversity to Nursing

You can find us:

- UML website www.uml.edu/NursingDiversity
- Follow BDN on Twitter @umlbdn
- Facebook bdn@uml.edu Current students would love to see your posts on Facebook.
- On campus in the new Health and Social Sciences Building Room 185

Special points of interest:

- BDN was established with grants from MDPH in 2007 and HRSA in 2008
- BDN has graduated 50 minority nurses
- BDN is part of a growing campus housed in a new building and part of the newly expanded UMass Lowell School of Nursing
- BDN has established an endowment fund to sustain its mission into the future

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What makes a Nurse Leader?

Patricia Walker, MS, FNP-BC, was an early Diversity Support Services Coordinator for the BDN program. She left the BDN program when she moved on to develop her House Call NP independent practice. She remained connected with the UMass Lowell SON by serving on the Nursing Advisory Board and is a great contributor. Her expertise in culturally competent APN primary care for adults and older adults is vast, and she has demonstrated her entrepreneurial spirit and success with her House Call NP practice in meeting the diverse needs of community-based adults and older adults requiring complex care needs across a variety of health care settings. In support of her efforts to provide advanced practice nursing care to geriatric populations, she has sought private and public funding to promote quality care. In 2009, she established Ideal Healthcare Solutions, Inc., whose mission is to provide appropriate care in the most appropriate setting. The intent of the program is to reduce acute care hospitalization, improve morbidity and mortality outcomes, and contain health care costs through the appropriate and timely management of acute and chronic conditions. The NP providers work collaboratively with the client’s personal care provider and other members of the healthcare team to provide a comprehensive and streamlined program of quality of care. Ideal Healthcare Solutions fills a health care gap, with programs designed to benefit the frail, chronically ill, disadvantaged, and short-term rehabilitation patients.

As both a practicing NP and CEO of Ideal Health Care Solutions, Pat demonstrates well the efforts at and positive outcomes from interdisciplinary and community-based participatory collaborative efforts to meet the needs of the CMS population. Her expertise and commitment to the care of the older adult permeates all that she does, including mentoring as a preceptor of future A-GNPs. She is a vocal spokesperson for the needs of clients and their families, and she is particularly astute at responding to cultural differences of older adults and their caregivers. She is a cutting-edge professional who utilizes evidence-based research in her practice to support decisions making and improve healthcare of older adults.

Pat was one of 4 Leadership Speakers for BDN in 2013-2014 and will be awarded the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association Excellence in Clinical Practice national award in September at the Annual Conference.

Thanks to Interim Dean of SON, Dr. Karen Melillo for submitting.

Leadership Academy brings Minority Nurse Leaders to Campus

Nursing leaders take on a variety of roles in the field of nursing. Some of them teach, such as Judith Cullinane, who is an Associate Professor at Simmons SON or Abraham Ndiwane, who is an Associate Professor at the MGH Institute. Some Nurse Leaders use their advanced degree to provided culturally competent care to veterans such as Maria Eden Gianan. Some are entrepreneurs such as Patricia Walker.

There are many leadership roles nurses can achieve. The BDN students in the Leadership Academy had the chance to meet and listen to the stories from four very different nurse leaders. Students commented that they learned more about advocacy from Patricia Walker and Alexander Ndiwane. Students left the leadership series feeling inspired, wanting to not only do more in their own careers as nurses but, also wanted to start doing more now as students. One student noted, “It makes me think in the sense that I can make a difference in the world. The presentations are very influential.” Students loved Maria Eden Gianan’s positive energy and enthusiasm. They admired Judith Cullinane’s passion and appreciated her insights into communication, especially her suggestions regarding ways to respond to patient questions. Each nurse leader shared a different background and had different passions in the field of nursing. Students learned from each speaker that there is a place for every story in nursing and achieving a place among nurse leaders will become part of their own story.

Maria Eden Gianan, ANP pictured above front row 3rd from the left
Teaching Cultural Competence to the Teachers

UMass Lowell has 5 Pillars of Excellence (http://www.uml.edu/2020/Pillars-of-Excellence.aspx) which drive our strategic plan as well as the daily function in the School of Nursing. One of the 5 Pillars includes Inclusive Culture. One way the School of Nursing strives to improve its inclusivity is to have national speakers provide a workshop annually for the SON faculty and staff to facilitate improvement in cultural competence. This year the speaker was Dr. Deborah Washington who is the Director of Diversity Patient Care Services at Mass General Hospital. Dr. Washington has created a variety of programs at MGH Institute to encourage and support diverse nursing students.

In May of 2014, Dr. Washington facilitated “The Art of Creating Affinity: Teaching Across Cultural Perspectives.” SON professors said that this program helped develop wonderful ways of addressing diverse students and faculty to work for success.

Dr. Washington is a former BDN Leadership Academy speaker. Students have asked to invite her back again soon!

New Leadership Team at UMass Lowell SON

Karen Devereaux Melillo has been named Interim Dean of the School of Nursing. She has been serving as the chair of Nursing for nine years. Associate Professor Lisa Abdallah was elected Chair of the School. Associate Professor Margaret Knight has been appointed Associate Chair.

The Department of Nursing was elevated to the status of School of Nursing in July 2013 and moved into a new state-of-the-art facility in the Health and Social Sciences Building on south campus.

With more than 600 students, the School of Nursing continues to build programs, offering bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate of nursing practice and Ph.D. degrees to meet the demanding needs of the healthcare industry.

The creation of this leadership position for the School of Nursing further elevates its status among peer institutions, offering increased opportunities for recruitment and retention of students and faculty. The School will expand community partners for innovative nursing education models and promote alumni, friends and corporate donor funding and endowment opportunities.

A national search for Dean of the School of Nursing will take place in two years.

Thanks to Dean of College of Health Science for sharing.

Below is a sample of the Honor Societies who have recognized the academic achievements as well as the leadership demonstrated by Bring Diversity to Nursing Student in 2013-2014.

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

Omicron Delta Kappa The National Leadership Honor Society
In December 2013, one BDN student, Anastasiya Ruskevich, graduated from the Nursing Program. Since graduation, she has passed the NCLEX and is actively working as an RN.

In June 2014, we added an additional 10 new graduates.

Congratulations to ALL! Pictured below:

Seniors from front left; Tram Tang, Kiran Adhikary, Jelissa Hernandez, Jalissa Thomas, Samantha Meas, April Howarth, Jelissa Semprit, Marlene Perez, Mercy Ajama, and Angelina Vasquez; pictured separately Anastasiya Ruskevich, Shivani Dave and Stephanie Tea.

Words can’t describe how thankful I am to have found this program. Being a first generation student and being of a different ethnic background in a career field that is mainly Caucasian, it’s difficult to go through this program. But BDN made it easier. It provided great comfort to know that someone was there to answer all the questions that I had.

Shivani Dave
Teaching Cultural Competence to the Teachers

Charmy Patel, former BDN undergrad now in MS Nursing

From the moment I began nursing school in 2009, I always knew I wanted to work in a small, community setting. My drive in pursuing an advanced nursing degree is that I believe it is the best way to make a positive difference and impact. I want to leave this world and its people in a better place than how I found it.

The first fundamental step in helping people in need is to aid them in terms of health. When the opportunity to go right into graduate school arose, I knew I had to take advantage. I completed UMass Lowell’s nursing program in the Spring 2013, and began pursuing my MS as a Family Nurse Practitioner the following fall. My motivation to continue my education stems from my love of learning and finding the best version of me. Currently, I work part-time on a busy medical surgical floor in a small community hospital while balancing graduate school part-time as well. I’ve had multiple opportunities to bridge what I learn in graduate school into my nursing practice at work. Daily I interact with classmates and patients that come from different backgrounds. I enjoy hearing their unique stories and perspectives. Graduate school is very different from nursing school in many aspects: there are a lot more readings, more papers to write, and a plethora of group projects. Students are expected to be more self-reliant and maintain a high 3.0 GPA. Also, I hold a position within the nursing GSO (Graduate Student Organization), which aims to support academic, social, and economic development of all graduate nursing students. I constantly utilize the organization skills I learned from BDN to balance my professional, academic, and personal life.

I aim to graduate in the Spring of 2016. I’ve had many people question me as to why I went back to school so early, with little clinical experience. My answer is simple: because I can. I’ll never stop learning. The more I know, the better I’m equipped to help my patients not only feel better, but lead healthier lives. My current position is one that I thrive in. I believe others can definitely follow in my footsteps and be just as successful: all they need to do is find confidence and dedication. Submitted by Charmy Patel

Djwan Scott, Former DSSC now UMass Lowell DNP

Djwan Scott graduated from UMass Lowell with a BS in Nursing in May 2005 and became licensed as an RN. In 2012, Djwan graduated from UMass Lowell with her Master’s Degree in Adult Gerontological Nursing. Djwan has worked as an RN at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and after receiving her advanced degree at Steward Health Care MVH as an NP Hospitalist.

For the last 4 years Djwan has been a major contributor to the success of BDN students in her role as Diversity Support Services Coordinator. Many students who have been part of the BDN program credit Djwan as one of the reasons they succeeded in Nursing.

In 2011, Djwan was recognized with two major awards. The first, in January, was the Excellence in Teaching/Excellence in Nursing Award from the Tufts Health Plan in conjunction with the MA Hospital Research and Education Association, and the second was through the New England Regional Black Nurses Association, Inc. Djwan was nominated for the latter because of the substantive contributions she has made to the “Bring Diversity to Nursing” Program at the University.

In 2012, Djwan was selected by Brigham & Women’s Department of Nursing and Patient Care Services as a Ujima Award Recipient. Ujima is one of the seven principles of Kwanza, which celebrates family, community and culture. At BWH, the annual Ujima Award and celebration recognizes the contributions of multicultural members of the Nursing and Patient Care Services community.

Djwan has brought many improvements to the program and has impacted all of the students who had the opportunity to work with her. The BDN team would like to offer a special thank you to Djwan for all of her years of dedication to BDN and the students.

Today, the team at BDN are saying goodbye to Djwan as the DSSC and hello to Djwan the DNP student. By continuing her advanced nursing degree Djwan will continue to bring expanded leadership to the field of nursing.
Nursing Reunion for BDN graduates, students, faculty and staff. The reunion will be held Thursday November 13, 2014 from 6 P.M.-7:30 P.M. at the Hoff Alumni Scholarship Center at 1 Perkins Street, Lowell, MA. This free event will feature light refreshments. Come see former classmates, BDN professors, and staff. This is a wonderful opportunity to network with BDN nurses who are working in various settings.

In 2009, the BDN program graduated two nursing students. In 2014, the graduates totaled 11. In all, BDN has graduated 50 diverse students for entry into the nursing profession.

In November 2014 we will be hosting the first Bring Diversity to Nursing Reunion for BDN graduates, students, faculty and staff.

The reunion will be held Thursday November 13, 2014 from 6 P.M.-7:30 P.M. at the Hoff Alumni Scholarship Center at 1 Perkins Street, Lowell, MA. This free event will feature light refreshments.

Do you see yourself here as a former BDN student? We want to see you at the REUNION!

Do you have any pictures from your UMass Lowell School of Nursing days with you and other BDN students? Please email them to Laura_Hajjar@uml.edu for display at the reunion.
Who made a difference in your life at UMass Lowell?
BDN has finished the second year of its second round of 3-year grant funding. We have graduated 50 BDN students with a BS degree in nursing. BDN alumni can be found working in local communities in Greater Lowell and the Merrimack Valley region as well as in states as far away as Minnesota and Texas. BDN alumni are working on advanced nursing degrees as well. We have also worked with thousands of middle school and high school students from Lowell and Lawrence to open their eyes to the possibilities of college and some have chosen nursing. BDN has some wonderful accomplishments.

The question we face as we begin our third and final year of BDN, with the support of HRSA funds, is will there be a BDN program in the fall of 2015? Will we be able to share the dream of nursing to students in Lowell in Lawrence schools? Will we be able to graduate outstanding minority nurses to aid the challenge of reducing health disparities for minority patients? Will we be able to continue to make a difference by providing culturally competent nurses and nurse leaders to the surrounding communities and throughout the country?

Your donation is critical to ensure future students will have the same opportunities you had at UMass Lowell and to encourage others to join the field of Nursing to offer patients culturally competent care.

Please take a moment to give now. It is because of YOU that together we can continue the mission of recruiting and retaining the top diverse candidates to the School of Nursing at UMass Lowell.

I am looking forward to continued success and serving new students in BDN in the 2014-2015 academic year!

Best Regards,

Laura

Laura Hajjar
Project Manager BDN