Bring Diversity to Nursing (BDN) has completed our 8th year. The HRSA-funded project has built on the goals of our first grant to recruit, retain and graduate diverse students from Lowell and Lawrence to become RNs. Our initial goal to have graduates work in communities where they can impact health disparities of minority populations.

Check out what’s been happening!

We expanded that pool when we added a new Leadership Academy for our students 3 years ago. Our leadership initiative has shown significant success. Since the BDN project began, we have graduated 59 students with Baccalaureate degrees in nursing. To celebrate this milestone a BDN reunion was held in November 2014. See pages 4-5 for updates from a truly remarkable event.

BDN students have demonstrated they are outstanding students. On pages 2 and 3, you will find stories about our award-winning students who are being recognized in the School, College and community.

Please consider submitting your stories as working nurses. We would love to share them with other BDN alumni and students. Check out page 6 to see the enthusiasm current students show when alumni return to campus and speak to current students.

A new opportunity allowed our Leadership Academy students to visit Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC). They were surprised to learn something you may not know about LCHC. See page 7 to find out more.

Also check out the link to the new College of Health Sciences Video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSWBp2fyp_E&feature=youtu.be

The video shows the amazing growth in research opportunities for the College.

What you will see throughout, is the amazing opportunities that are linked to BDN. BDN plans on promoting the lessons learned with the broader School of Nursing with the hopes that greater inclusivity will bring future growth to the changing face of Nursing.

Inside this issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside this issue:</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet the 2015 Graduates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDN Students Recognized</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons Learned: Road to passing the NCLEX-RN</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDN Reunion</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men In Nursing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDN Visit to Lowell Community Health Center</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where can I find Bring Diversity to Nursing?

Website: www.uml.edu/NursingDiversity

Twitter: @umlbdn

Facebook: Bring Diversity and Leadership to Nursing

Office: Health & Social Sciences Building Room #185
In May 2015, 8 nursing students graduated to become the newest class of BDN alumni.

Pictured from left to right: Samantha Ayotunde Akibu, Faith Kaliba, Rachel Peiting Wang, Diana Almonacid, Alexis Casimir, Hemvatey Chhean, Mary Kigotho, and Tiffany Choun.

Tabitha Nyankiir was honored in the fall at the Massachusetts Statehouse by Mass Senior Care Foundation as one of their 50 Foundation Scholars. In June, Tabitha was recognized by the Women Inspiring Success and Empowerment (WISE) at their Annual Breakfast. She was awarded a scholarship as a working woman who has returned to college to advance her career.

Samantha Spoto, sophomore undergraduate student and Research Co-Op for BDN, worked with Dr. Jacqueline Dowling on Introducing Nursing as a Career Choice to Elementary Students. Samantha reviewed past research by BDN and compiled new data by visiting local elementary schools and reading the book, Nurses, by Cecilia Mindon and Linda Armantrout. Each classroom Samantha visited received a copy of the book. Samantha is working on an article on her research this summer. She was awarded Best Poster at the UMass Lowell Student Research Symposium in April 2015.

Graduating senior, Alexis Casimir was awarded the Dean’s award at the Pinning Ceremony. The Dean’s Award is given to the graduating senior with the highest overall GPA.

Congratulations for achieving excellence in the School of Nursing!
BDN graduates can be found working as Baccalaureate-prepared RNs and NPs locally, regionally, and nationally.

- Boston Children’s Hospital
- Boston Home Health Agency
- Bournewood Hospital
- Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
- David Grant US Air Force Medical Center
- Lowell Community Health Center
- Lowell General Hospital
- Mary Immaculate Restorative Care Center
- Mayo Clinic
- Millbury Health Care Center
- New England Pediatric Care
- Saint Joseph’s Hospital
- Salter Healthcare
- Southern NH Medical Center
- UMass Memorial Medical Center
- United Health Group
- Winchester Hospital
- Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital

BDN Alumni – if we missed you, please let us know where you are working.

### Lessons Learned on the Road to Passing the NCLEX-RN

**NCLEX** stands for National Council (of State Boards of Nursing) Licensure Examination. It is one of the most important exams nursing graduates will ever take. New graduates can find advice to pass the NCLEX in books, on-line and in prep courses. BDN asked recent graduates who passed the exam what helped the most.

1. **Study, study, study.** There is no substitution for learning everything you can in nursing courses.
2. **Review the content of all the major subject areas and concentrate more studying on anything you found difficult.**
3. **Attend the Anderson Review.**
4. **Practice, practice, practice.** Find NCLEX review questions and do them everyday. Not just 10 or 20. Aim for 50-120 daily. (Really – more than 100 per day!)
5. **If you are not scoring at least 70% on a practice test or are finding items you don’t recognize, you should continue to do more questions.**
6. **Use the Saunders Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN Examination and Prioritization, Delegation, and Assignment books provided by BDN.**
7. **Form a study group to stay motivated.**

These tips will ensure that come exam day, you will be ready to pass the NCLEX on the first try and be ready to begin the career you have worked hard to achieve in Nursing.

### Honor Societies who have recognized the academic achievements as well as the leadership demonstrated by Bring Diversity to Nursing Students.
BDN alumni, current students, faculty, staff, former BDN staff and members from the Nursing Advisory Board met at the new University Crossing to celebrate seven years of BDN. Alumni reconnected with faculty and former classmates. Current BDN students met former BDN students and listened intently to learn where they are working, what they experience, how they passed the NCLEX-RN, and what they enjoy about being nurses.

There was much to celebrate that evening. A program that began as a research project to learn more about how to improve recruitment and retention of students from Lowell and Lawrence has become a strategic goal for the School of Nursing. The project has proven that specific supports for overcoming barriers to education can have significant impacts on educational outcomes.

We gathered together to celebrate the success of the program as well as the success of our graduates and students.

Another important milestone is the creating and building of the BDN Endowment fund. This fund, initially created by the outstanding generosity of Dr. Jacqueline Dowling, has grown through her continued support along with the support of 100% of the BDN faculty and staff. It has also grown through generous support of BDN alumni. Dowling’s vision of a self-sustaining BDN program meeting the changing needs of nursing and future nurses has set up funds to continue this very successful endeavor.

While celebrations of what has been achieved in a short time were enjoyed, it was evident that the fund will depend on annual support of BDN friends and alumni to allow it to become fully sustainable in the future.

Two past BDN staff, Patricia Walker and Djwan Scott, were honored for their roles in developing the Coordinator of Diversity Support Services role. Their early efforts created a model of support that has been demonstrated as highly impactful. Many recent graduates commented that Djwan’s high expectations and support were the reason they graduated and passed the NCLEX during their first attempt.

It was a wonderful evening to recognize the success of BDN and Alumni of BDN. It was also an inspiration for what BDN will do in the future.
Above: Diversity Support Coordinator Tabitha Gad, alumna Agnes Ndiritu, Dr. Shellie Simons, and alumna Charmy Patel, talk about the pressures and rewards of completing an advanced degree in Nursing. Tabitha, Agnes and Charmy are all part of the NP program.

Above: Dean Shortie McKinney expressed her support for the accomplishments UMass Lowell, School of Nursing, BDN graduates are achieving in health care.

Below: Nursing Advisory Board Member and former BDN Diversity Support Coordinator, Patricia Walker, is pictured as she is recognized for her commitment to future nurses.

Left: Former BDN Diversity Support Coordinator Djwan Scott was also recognized for her contribution to improving the educational outcomes of BDN students. She is pictured with BDN faculty member and Chair of the School of Nursing, Dr. Lisa Abdallah.

Left: BDN student Mercy Midenyo listened to advice from the newest BDN nurses, Jaissa Thomas, BS, RN ('14), Jalissa Hernandez, BS, RN ('14), Shivani Dave, BS, RN ('14), and Stephanie Tea, BS, RN('14).

Right: Dr. Margaret Knight and seniors Mary Kigotho, Erina Khin, Diana Almonacid, and Tabitha Nyankiir share a laugh as they are reunited with BDN alumni.
On April 7, undergraduate nursing students attended “Nurses Speak”, to learn from a panel of eight nurses about their experiences with passing the NCLEX, how they survived nursing school, things nursing students should know, and advice they could offer working in different roles as nurses. BDN Student and Men in Nursing President, Ernie Maurissaint, expected about a dozen students to show up for this event. He and co-organizer MIN Vice President, Jonathan Pazienza, were shocked to see 60 students at their first event.

The nurses were UMass Lowell Alumni working in different facilities and nurses from Lahey Clinic. Maurissaint credits BDN for his confidence in being a leader in the Men in Nursing organization. He says that he has gained so much that he wants to give back by encouraging all of his peers to learn from each other. Maurissaint was pleased to have co-workers from Lahey and UMass Lowell Alumni share their experiences with nursing students.

Erica Elia, a sophomore nursing student, left feeling better prepared for life as a nurse. The panel’s advice gave her insights in passing the NCLEX-RN. She also felt more confident that she could enroll in the Fast Track MS program to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. She says, “I have more confidence in my degree choice hearing about the diverse roles open to nurses.”

Jelissa Semprit, a recent graduate and RN working at New England Pediatric Care, was impressed at the students’ eagerness to learn and gain more information about the nursing profession. Jelissa graduated in 2014 and was pleased to be able to reconnect with nursing students and share the things she wished she knew as a nursing student.

Students left the event with new insights on nursing. For Maurissaint, it was an opportunity to share with his peers the things he has learned working at Lahey Clinic and being a part of BDN. Ernie demonstrates the leadership characteristics which BDN seeks to develop in the BDN participants. He advocates for himself and his peers today and will be ready to advocate for his patients as a future RN.
On a cold day in March, 13 BDN students traveled to Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) to learn more about nursing opportunities in the community. They learned that LCHC is located in a beautiful, renovated mill building. LCHC provides health care for individuals and families.

More than 62% of the health center’s 340 employees are bi-lingual. The staff speaks more than 28 different languages and 80 staff are trained as medical interpreters. In 2012, the health center served 46,991 people through 156,248 visits. Ninety-one percent of those served are below 200% of the federal poverty level. Over 50% of patients are served in a language other than English, and more than 70% were people of color.

One student noted in a post evaluation, “I had the misconception that health care centers would lack the resources and give off the impression that the employees are lazy and underpaid. However, the healthcare members we met were extremely friendly, hard working, and care about patients and their co-workers”. Another student said, “Coming from immigrant parents I was surprised to learn about the barriers that immigrants face with healthcare.” Many students left the tour with a richer vision of community healthcare and their own potential to make an impact as nurses.

One student summed the experience up as, ” I am inspired by the stories of each presenter from LCHC. They made me want to work at a health center such as theirs. I left with my eyes opened to all the ways nurses can affect a community working in such a location.

UMass Lowell School of Nursing and LCHC share a vision that nurses can improve the outcome for patients and a key aspect to change is providing diverse students an education that allows them to work with diverse community members for improved health outcomes.

Pictured above-Bobby Tugbiyele, Talent Management Specialist at LCHC and Sonith Peou, Director of the LCHC Metta Center with Dr. Jacqueline Dowling of UMass Lowell.
BDN Endowment Fund Created 2012

Dear BDN Supporter:

BDN is coming to the end of the HRSA funding, which has provided a program which has impacted the current returning 30 students, 59 graduates from the SON, the School of Nursing, College of Health Sciences and the diverse population our graduates serve. In the past seven years, BDN has:

♦ Provided financial, educational, and social support to over 1,000 BDN participant students at UMass Lowell and partner schools.
♦ Provided Cultural Competence professional development workshops to the SON faculty and leaders of the College of Health Sciences.
♦ Provided travel scholarships to 4 students to attend the National Student Nurses Association annual convention.
♦ Encouraged graduates to pursue higher degrees and have two BDN alumni enrolled in master’s degree programs and three have graduated with advanced nursing degrees.
♦ Graduated 59 nursing students who now work in local, regional and nationally recognized hospitals and facilities including the Lowell Community Health Center, Lowell General Hospital, Methuen’s Holy Family Hospital, and the Lowell Community Health Center.
♦ Impacted the health outcomes of diverse population by graduating BS-prepared nurses who speak over 27 languages in addition to English.
♦ Provided the College of Health Sciences Resource center with resources in the form of books for all nursing students.

Your donation is critical to ensure future students will have access to the supports which overcome barriers to education and foster academic success.

Please take a moment to give now. Your gift will ensure future that BDN can continue to make an impact. I am looking forward to continued success and serving students in BDN in the 2015-2016 academic year!

Best Regards,

Laura

Laura Hajjar
Project Manager BDN