

## Alum recognized for contributions to pediatric pain management

By **Mark Kemball**

Over two decades Helen Turner, R.N., D.N.P. '09, focused her work on pain management in children and how it differs from adult pain.



Dr. Turner's research and clinical practice has advanced knowledge in post-operative pain management; investigated safety issues in children with chronic pain requiring opioid therapy; and addressed the pain management needs of children experiencing autism, gastrointestinal dysfunction and cystic fibrosis (CF).

Initially focused on the care of children with CF, Dr. Turner was fascinated by the management of pain in children. "People do not understand that kids have chronic pain," she said. "Pediatric pain differs from adult pain." When the opportunity arose to establish her research and clinical practice solely around pain management, she went for it.

"I do a lot of detective work," she said. "By spending time with the patient and their family you can consider emotional trauma that often follows physical trauma; bullying; and other systemic issues caused by food or financial insecurity. Often I am working with families who are scared and in pain themselves."

**"I feel it is such a gift that I get to do this. It's not like I am some sort of magic worker. You just need the patience to see it through."**

– HELEN TURNER, R.N., D.N.P. '09

A researcher consistently funded since 2000, Dr. Turner was recognized as the School of Nursing Alumni Association's Alum of the Year for 2019 at the Winter Completion ceremony held in December. The annual award celebrates a legacy of commitment to clinical practice, education and mentoring.

"I feel it is such a gift that I get to do this," said Dr. Turner, who was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 2011. "It's not like I am some sort of magic worker. You just need the patience to see it through."

## Awards and announcements

- **Kristen Beiers-Jones**, assistant professor at the OHSU School of Nursing, received the Oregon Public Health Association Policy Award. This award is given to a person or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to advancing public health policy in Oregon.
- National League for Nursing Appointments: **Heather Hawk**, Ashland Campus, and **Nick Miehle**, Monmouth Campus have been appointed for two-year terms as NLN Ambassadors. Personal outreach by an NLN ambassador ensures that faculty and educational leaders in all schools of nursing are kept informed about the NLN's programs, grant opportunities, and member involvement initiatives. Four core areas: Approachability, visibility, responsiveness, and commitment, are guidelines for how Ambassadors lead.
- **Angela Docherty**, Monmouth Campus, has been appointed to a three-year term on the NLN Research Grant Review Panel.
- **Joanne Noone**, Ashland Campus, has been appointed to a two-year term on the NLN Academy of Nursing Review Panel.
- New Fellow of the American Heart Association: **MinkYoung Song**, Dr. Song is a behavioral scientist and epidemiologist, her developing program of research centers on changing health behaviors as a strategy for the prevention of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Adam White** (pictured below, second from left), B.S. with a major in nursing '17, received the DAISY award from the Portland VA. Adam was also a VANAP scholar while he worked toward his degree. Veterans nominate their nurses for these awards. The nominations are sent to the DAISY selection work group with the identity of the nominee concealed.



## By the numbers

Percentage of enrolled Accelerated BS and three-year BS nursing students who are either first generation or graduating from a disadvantaged high school\*

59

40

Percentage of PhD, DNP and Masters students who are either first generation or graduating from a disadvantaged high school\*

\*Figures are student-reported. "Disadvantaged high school" includes graduated from a high school at which many of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches; graduated from a high school from which a low percentage of seniors received a high school diploma; and/or from a school district where 50 percent or less of graduates go to college or where college education is not encouraged

SAVE THE DATE

**THE 2020 NURSING REUNION** will take place at the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland, Oregon at noon on Sunday, June 14. Invitations will be sent to reunion classes and nearby graduates. If you are not a member of a 2020 milestone class or Oregon/SW Washington resident and would like to receive an invitation, please email [alumni@ohsu.edu](mailto:alumni@ohsu.edu).

## Sister brother duo share life goal

By **Christi Richardson-Zboralski**

Emily and Glenn Alvarez share a set of parents, DNA, and the same life goal — to graduate with a nursing degree from OHSU. Both want to help underrepresented or underserved individuals who face structural barriers with limited resources navigate the health care landscape.

Emily started her nursing program on the Klamath Falls campus in 2017 after a few years of volunteer work at various hospitals. She said, "I watched nurses care for patients in a compassionate, respectful and empowering way. This positive experience motivated me to become a nurse."

Glenn began his student journey in 2019 on the Ashland campus. At an early age, Glenn knew he wanted to explore health care professions: A favorite Halloween costume included a white lab coat and a plastic stethoscope. Years later, Emily recommended that Glenn train as a Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) to see if nursing was a good fit.

Each received a HealthE Scholars scholarship, to help fund their educations. Glenn said, "I am able to not worry financially and have time to focus on my education. I do not have to work extra hours outside of the program. I am given a chance to reach for my goals that not all get to experience."

Once they started on their individual paths both quickly saw an opportunity to expand their goals. "As a male Hispanic, an underrepresented group in the nursing profession, I hope this is a first step for Hispanic communities who struggle to speak English, to know that someone like them is out there to help," says Glenn.



Emily and Glenn Alvarez

# Connections

A PUBLICATION FROM THE OHSU SCHOOL OF NURSING

SPRING 2020



Dusti Leech, La Grande student, shows her school spirit at Eastern Oregon University's homecoming parade.

## Greetings colleagues and friends,

By **Susan Bakewell-Sachs**, dean and vice president of nursing affairs



I hope that you have had a happy and healthy start to 2020, the WHO designated International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. Themes for the year are Lead, Excel, Innovate. This year also marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Throughout the year, OHSU SoN will be highlighting and celebrating the vital work of nurses and nursing. In this newsletter we shine a spotlight on our two new Sr. Associate Deans – Dr. Hector Olvera Alvarez for Research and Dr. Karen Reifenstein for Student Affairs and Diversity. Dr. Carla Hagen has graciously stepped into the role of Interim Sr. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. In January, we welcomed new Family NP program director, Dr. Jackie Webb. We are actively engaged in implementation of the new OHSU 2025 strategic plan and in creating the next three-year priorities of the SoN strategic plan. The OHSU School of Nursing faculty and staff are committed to leading, excelling, and innovating across our missions.



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HECTOR OLVERA ALVAREZ



PhD follows unorthodox path to OHSU

**By Lee Lewis Husk**  
Hector Olvera Alvarez might have been a priest if things had turned out differently. Instead he turned to science where, after years of twists and turns, his path led to his current position as head of research for OHSU's School of Nursing and its PhD program.



Born and raised in the border town of Juarez, Mexico, he saw firsthand what he calls “socially associated misfortune,” fueling a passion for service. Instead of priesthood, he saw science as a gateway to bettering the lives of people around him and beyond.

“I knew before I stepped on a college campus that I wanted to get a PhD and become a scientist,” he recalled. He chose civil engineering, earning a bachelor's degree from the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez, with an interest in air pollution.

“It became personal,” he recalled. “It was clear that air pollution in the El Paso-Juarez area was adversely affecting the health of children, elders and the poor. I wanted to understand what it was about being poor, for instance, that makes a person more vulnerable to air pollution.”

Between 2006 and 2019, Olvera Alvarez was PI and co-PI of several of National Institutes of Health grants related to the effects of air pollution on human health. He was also active in various initiatives focusing on health disparities in Hispanic populations. During this time period he served as a senior research adviser to the dean and directed UTEP's nursing and health leadership institute and was a leader in the Hispanic Health Disparities Research Center.

In 2015, he began directing all the UTEP nursing school's research efforts, building the program up and enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration. UTEP nominated him for the JPB Environmental Health Fellowship at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health with emphasis on health disparities and environmental health, a position he won and held from 2014 to 2019.

After 20 years at UTEP, Olvera Alvarez, now 44, brought his impressive credentials to Oregon where he now serves as senior associate dean of research and director of the PhD program in nursing.

Dr. Olvera Alvarez was attracted to OHSU's School of Nursing by the opportunity to collaborate with nursing researchers working on Biobehavioral and Health Equity science; the two Signature Science areas at the School. Because his scientific focus is at the intersection of both these areas, he hopes to help the School build on its history of interdisciplinary collaborations and launch lines of research that bridge these areas. His plans include facilitating more collaboration across the school and the university, to support the young promising talent at the school, and attract energetic nursing scientists.

“I enjoy working with nurses,” he said. “There's a connection with engineering because both are applied fields. We're not basic scientists. Nurses can translate findings quickly into the bedside and community, addressing what's meaningful to Oregon and the nation.”

KAREN REIFENSTEIN



Q&A



Karen Reifenstein, Ph.D., R.N., will join the OHSU School of Nursing as the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Diversity in February. Dr. Reifenstein comes to us from The University of Rochester where her role as Director of School of Nursing Education for Diversity and Inclusion worked to strengthen the cohesiveness of diversity-related efforts and expand the support for diversity across the Medical Center. She is a former pediatric nurse and Director of Nursing for a home health agency. The OHSU School of Nursing had the opportunity to learn more about her.

Q. Why did you choose OHSU?

A. I completed a nursing post doctorate fellowship in 2011-2013 at OHSU, working with Dr. Lillian Nail and the late Dr. Frances Lee-Lin. I worked primarily remotely from my home in Rochester, NY, but had onsite visits as well. I was very impressed by the faculty, staff, students and facilities while I was on site. When the opportunity presented to join OHSU faculty in a leadership role, I felt it was a very important endeavor to undertake.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish in your new role in Student Affairs?

A. I hope to build upon OHSU School of Nursing core values of integrity, diversity, collaboration, innovation, and excellence. I especially would like to enhance diversity within the School of Nursing to help better reflect societal demographic trends. Additionally, I hope to enhance the support structure that will optimize successful completion of degree programs. All students need to have a sound road map to help them successfully navigate their academic and professional journey.

Q. What does equity and inclusion and diversity mean to you?

A. In the broadest sense, I think of equity as treating all people fairly, and not allowing personal characteristics – such as race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disabilities to have any negative impact on the person's potential to fully participate in society and succeed in life.

Diversity is multifaceted and encompasses everything that can make an individual unique, but simply recognizing these differences is not enough as we need to embrace everyone's unique attributes. Embracing and valuing these differences- rather than simply tolerating them – is the essence of inclusion.

Q. What or who inspires you in your daily work?

A. My inspiration is knowing that I can have a role in assisting students to achieve their academic and professional goals. It is especially rewarding when a former student tells me that my interactions with them made a positive difference in their education.

Q. Would you like to share something unique or fun about yourself or anything else?

A. I have been known to drive 40 minutes to get to a good Pilates class.

MARY BETH MARTIN



Nursing informs role as VP of Women's and Children's Services

**By Lee Lewis Husk**  
Over the years, Mary Beth Martin, R.N., B.S.N., M.B.A., has been an au pair, a medical device inventor, a multimillion-dollar fundraiser, and a program developer, as well as a registered nurse and clinical leader. Since 2017, she has also served as Vice President of OHSU's Women's and Children's Services.

With a nursing degree and an MBA rounding out her vast tool kit of experience, she leads OHSU Doernbecher, one of the nation's Best Children's Hospitals according to *U.S. New & World Report*, and oversees an innovative and integrative clinic dedicated to women's health. She is also responsible for business units that generate \$185 million in net patient revenues annually, more than 1200 full-time staff, and tight collaboration with physician leaders in pediatrics and women's health services.

Regardless of the various proficiencies she has obtained throughout her career, for Martin, nursing sits at the core of her leadership approach at OHSU.

“When I mentor others, one of the first things that I tell them is that nursing is foundational to whatever pathway they choose, both professionally and personally,” she said. “My work in the field of nursing has prepared me for many of the tasks I complete as a VP. From collaborative teamwork to developing patient-centered programming. It all stems back to my nursing experience.”



From leadership positions in cardiology at both Texas Children's Hospital and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, to the role as executive director of the Colorado Institute for Maternal & Fetal Health, this experience led her to find her passion as a champion for high-quality pregnancy care, including maternal-fetal medicine and reducing neonatal and perinatal mortality. Scientific research drew her into its orbit as well, and – during her time at Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine – she ran a National Institutes of Medicine study looking at the natural history of AIDS in children. This not only fueled her career, but her personal life as well, when she adopted two children born to a mother who died of AIDS. “As an HIV nurse at the time, I knew I could give them the care they needed outside of the hospital,” she said. “Both continue to thrive and have even made me a grandmother.”

This experience also urged her to invent and obtain U.S. patents to improve data collection in pediatric cardiac diagnosis, a monitoring vest trademarked “Teddy Top” for children and a pillow to reduce the pain of coughing after surgery.

When she received a call about a position at OHSU Doernbecher in early 2017, she immediately knew it was the right fit. “All the elements of my career came together for this spot: pediatrics, obstetrics and maternal-fetal medicine. I knew that serving the women and children of Oregon was my next calling,” she said.

Today she enjoys a strong partnership with hospital nurses, as well as other OHSU leaders and regional healthcare systems.

“I have the wonderful opportunity to work with Susan (Bakewell-Sachs), who was one of the first people to welcome me to the job,” she said. Together the two have collaborated in building “a solid nursing team” around clinical, academic and research initiatives. “We're going to do great things because we have a partnership with all the key players who can build on OHSU and Doernbecher's already excellent service to women, children and their families.”

“When I mentor others, one of the first things that I tell them is that nursing is foundational to whatever pathway they choose, both professionally and personally. My work in the field of nursing has prepared me for many of the tasks I complete as a VP. From collaborative teamwork to developing patient-centered programming. It all stems back to my nursing experience.”

– MARY BETH MARTIN, R.N., B.S.N., M.B.A.,



International year of the nurse and midwife

The World Health Organization has designated 2020 The International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. This year also marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

There are so many examples of remarkable nurses and midwives in our community of alumni, partners and leaders. We are proud of each and every one of them. This year, we will highlight some of the work they continually do throughout the year.

Follow or join in on the conversation through social media by using [#SupportNursesAndMidwives](#)



- OHSU School of Nursing doctoral programs:
- Family Nurse Practitioner
  - Nurse Anesthesia
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