

# PhD in Nursing Program Newsletter



## A Note from the Director

Happy Trails

I will retire from Northeastern University on May 10th. In my eight years at Northeastern I have enjoyed a number of roles, but none more than that of Nursing PhD Program Director. Working with young scholars as they cultivate research questions and develop their writing skills is an incredibly fulfilling experience. But becoming a septuagenarian made me realize that it was time for a change...and less commuting. I am fortunate to be able to continue my research as well as my part time faculty position at Boston Children's Hospital in the Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine's LEAH (Leadership Education in Adolescent Health) Interdisciplinary Fellowship Program. I will continue to serve on several dissertation committees and look forward to keeping in touch with our PhD students and alumni!

Fortunately for us, Dr. Barbara Guthrie has agreed to resume the role of Nursing PhD Program Director, having served in that capacity 2014-2017.

A number of Northeastern Nursing faculty are retiring this year; however, this Fall several new faculty will join the School of Nursing.

## SON Faculty Retirements

**Michelle Beauchesne,**  
DNSc, RN, CPNP, FAAN,  
FNAP, FAANP

**Susan J. Roberts,**  
DNsc, ANP, FAAN

**Mary "Suzie" Tarmina,**  
PhD, BSN, RN/NP

**Pamela J. Burke,**  
PhD, RN, FSAHM, FAAN

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# A Note from the Director Continued

Some trails are happy ones,  
Others are blue.

It's the way you ride the trail that counts,  
Here's a happy one for you.

Happy trails to you,  
Until we meet again.  
Happy trails to you,  
Keep smiling until then.

Who cares about the clouds when we're together?  
Just sing a song, and bring the sunny weather.

Happy trails to you,  
Until we meet again.



The teacher in me is searching for words to say something profound or inspiring as I bid you adieux. Instead, an old song from my childhood pops into my head - Happy Trails by Dale Evans and Roy Rogers. They were stars of a popular cowboy TV show in the 1950's and at the end of each show they would sing this song before riding off into the sunset. Their lyrics are a metaphor of my heartfelt wish for each of you.

- Pam Burke

## MANY THANKS ALI SALINGER!

Ali Salinger is leaving the School of Nursing as she is graduating with her post-masters Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) in College Student Development and Counseling. Ali will transition to her new role as a Career Advisor in Northeastern University's Employer Engagement and Career Design - how lucky they are! Over the past two years as our fabulous PhD/DNP Administrative Coordinator, Ali has been an invaluable asset and major contributor to both doctoral programs. First of all, she can multi-task better than anyone! Secondly, she is supremely organized, efficient, and thorough. Thirdly - and most important - she really cares about people and goes above and beyond to bring things to fruition. Most of what I did as a Program Director was thanks to Ali! All the paper work and procedures associated with student admissions, SGA/GSS support, registration, reimbursement, reprographics, etc. etc. were thanks to Ali! She's an advocate, a trouble shooter, and an excellent communicator who has done the job of two people. I feel so fortunate to be her colleague and friend! PB



# CHOOSING A RESEARCH TOPIC

RACHEL POZZAR, PHD, RN

## **In the very beginning...**

- Be open to opportunities for mentorship and collaboration, even if the relevance of those opportunities to your intended project is not immediately apparent. The presence of a good mentor-- one who is (a) an expert in a relevant content area or research method; (b) committed to your professional development; and (c) willing and available to mentor you— can dramatically affect your success as a doctoral student. If you have an opportunity to work with a mentor who fulfills these criteria, it may be worth keeping an open mind about the direction of your research.
- Remember that a dissertation is one project. It is not your life's work; rather, it is a launching pad for your eventual life's work. Listen to the advice of trusted mentors when they tell you whether or not your idea is achievable in 3-4 years.

## **Once you've identified a potential topic...**

- Know the literature describing your area of research interest. Understanding the “gap” in the literature related to your topic is a start, but it's also wise to have a sense of what “next steps” have most recently been recommended by other scientists in your field. If you're not sure, refer to the “discussion” or “implications for research” sections of recently published articles related to your topic. As you write your dissertation proposal and your review of the literature, you can cite these authors' arguments as justification for your study.
- Explore whether any similar projects are currently in the works. Search for your research topic on Google and ResearchGate. Check the NIH Reporter (<https://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm>) for funded grants related to your topic. Although your project should build on existing knowledge, it's important for your project to be novel and distinct from the work that other (potentially more experienced and well-resourced) scientists are doing
- Think strategically! Does your selected topic allow you to develop a research trajectory? In other words, after you answer your current research question, what would be the next logical step? This is especially important if you plan to apply for a post-doc or a career development (K) award toward the end of your doctoral program.

## **Once you've completed several class assignments...**

- At this point, you'll likely have an idea of whether your topic is a good fit. If you decide to run with it, don't reinvent the wheel. Use a reference management software (such as EndNote) to store citations and article PDFs. When possible, stick to writing about your dissertation topic. Think about the papers you write in class as being the first drafts of potential dissertation manuscripts. (Cont on p.4)

- Submit the abstract of one of your papers to a nursing conference. A poster presentation at ENRS is a good place to start. Conferences offer networking opportunities and the chance to see what other scientists in your field are up to (and, of course, presentations are great for your CV). They also serve to identify you as someone who studies your topic!

**At any time...**

- Don't be afraid to reach out to other students and recent graduates. We understand what you're going through!

**Congratulations Rachel Pozzar on your Post-Doctoral Fellowship Position at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute funded by the American Cancer Society!**

## TIPS & TRICKS FROM A RECENT GRADUATE

*KATHRYN ROBINSON, PHD, RN*



- Utilize your cohorts strengths!! This is a team journey
- Use a graduated classmate's dissertation Proquest submission for help with formatting
- Get at least 1 article published before defending. You will be very thankful to have one of your chapters completed.
- Think outside the box, never settle for the 'status quo.' Challenge yourself
- Apply for every opportunity even if you think you won't get it. It will strengthen your writing and get your name out into the world faster.
- Your time is valuable. Be very strategic with your time.
- If you apply for an academic position after graduation, note that this limits certain grant funding awards.
- Post-docs are not guaranteed and are highly competitive, so start to look early and be open-minded to other potential opportunities.
- Your cohort of PhD students are the only ones who will truly understand what you are going through. These relationships will last a lifetime so nurture them.
- If possible, do a research practicum outside of Northeastern to gain a more 'real-life' perspective of your field of interest.

(Cont on p. 5)

- Reach out to mentors in your field when attending conferences.
- Make business cards and keep them with you at all times.
- Always ask for constructive feedback on everything you submit including grant and job applications so you learn how to strengthen for the next time.
- Take every opportunity to network by connecting in-person and through web platforms.
- Make professional accounts with LinkedIn and ResearchGate (you will be googled more than you think and they will reference these accounts when you meet).
- Pick dissertation committee members who will nurture your growth and want to see you succeed. Your collaboration should include publishing articles together and the process of editing your materials pushes you further in your skills.
- In the last few months before you defend, there will be a lot of contact with your dissertation team. Make sure they have the time to dedicate to you in advance.
- Plan out all your dissertation meetings in advance and include 1-1 meetings with each dissertation committee member and get on their calendars at least one month in advance if possible.
- Northeastern offers graduate students an opportunity to apply for reimbursement toward attendance of one conference per year. Explore this option and get the experience.
- Attending and presenting at conferences helps to motivate you, gives you further research ideas, helps with building connections, and reminds you why you' are in this program.



## TRIBUTE TO PAM BURKE

On behalf of all the PhD students both past and present, thank you for all that you have done for us! You have made it clear that you will still be here for all of us and willing to help in any way you can (as you aren't leaving town). We have had the great privilege of having you as our wonderful director for the past two years. Once we have all graduated, we will all look back at our PhD program and picture you! You have taught us so many important lessons in life. We are all so sad to see you go but we wish you nothing but the best for your next stage in life. I am sure we will all keep in touch and we know you will be all of our cheerleader for the years to come! We love you!

# UPDATES

## Presentations & Publications

### Michael A. Miller

Gertrude Mary Gerrard. Chief Anesthetist, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital 1919-1946. Journal of Anesthesia History, April 2019, Richmond, VA.

### Siobon Barrett

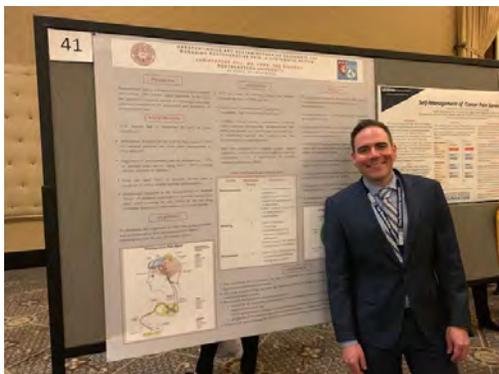
Associations of Condomless Sex with Dyadic and Social Mutuality Among Black Women in Heterosexual Relationships. Creating Healthy Work Environments Conference, New Orleans, LA.



### Chris Gill

Gabapentinoids and Acetaminophen as Adjuvants for Managing Postoperative Pain: A Systematic Review. ENRS Conference, April 2019, Providence, RI.

Chris was selected as the School of Nursing PhD Student Representative alongside DNP Student Rep. Piter Jules.



## Honors & Awards

### Elizabeth Henderson

Gamma Epsilon Research Award, Sigma Theta Tau, April 2019

Timothy J. Karnisky Scholarship  
Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance, April 2019

### Jacqueline Brady

Gamma Epsilon Research Award, Sigma Theta Tau, April 2019

MSNO Annie McKay Memorial Scholarship award.  
April 2019

### Sigma Nursing Honors Society Inductees 2019

Maggie Eaton  
Jessica Wallar



*"There cannot be a stressful crisis next week. My schedule is already full."*

**- Henry Kissinger**

**Former US Secretary of State**