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## President's Pen Nan Smith Blair, PhD, RN

It is with great excitement that I am writing this first President's column for SNRS Southern Connections. As Cindy Munro passed the president's gavel to me, I was grateful for her mentorship over the past two years. Her wisdom and ability to maintain a steady course for SNRS has truly benefited the organization. I want to thank her and the other extraordinary board members rotating off this year including Liz Reifsnider (Grants), Erick Hodges (Development), Donna Scott Tilley (Communications) and Leanne Lefler (Secretary) who is changing roles to head up the Development Committee. They have been amazing people to work with during the past two years. I also want to welcome our new board members including Demetrius Porche (President-Elect), Donelle Barnes (Secretary), Rasheeta Chandler (Communications) and Tracey Yap (Grants) who complement our existing board including Marygrace Hernandex-Leveille (Vice President), Pam Baker De Guzman (Treasurer), Patricia Kinser (Awards), Willie Mae Abel (Membership) and Sheila Davis (Research Interest Groups). I am amazed at the talent these board members bring to the table and their focus on our mission and strategic plan to advance our organization and secure its future. We are also fortunate to have Ann Mehan Crosse as our Executive Director and the Kellen Management firm which bring years of organizational management experience to support the mission of SNRS. Our previous presidents and board members have left a clear path for SNRS success. As your new president, I want to insure the future of SNRS is secure and bright. I pledge that we will continue the transparency



you have come to expect from our organization.

We will be examining ways to secure the financial base of the organization during the next year. One way is through the "30 for 30" campaign initiated at our annual meeting in Williamsburg, VA. As we celebrated our SNRS's 30th anniversary, a "30 for 30" campaign was initiated to support SNRS research grants. Our goal is for every member to donate \$30 (or more) in celebration of our organization's reaching this important milestone and help secure the future of our research grants. If every member participated we would raise approximately \$39,000 toward our research foundation.

As I write this newsletter we are in the midst of March Madness. I am reminded of a quote from the great UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden: "It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen." A small contribution from each of you can collectively help our research foundation provide research grants to future nurse scientists. The synergy found in SNRS members in working with others for a common purpose or benefit is an amazing quality. When we work synergistically, all of our members are working together and we can accomplish more than we can alone.

Serving SNRS,  
Nan Smith-Blair, President

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### **A Message from the Director of Communications Rasheeta Chandler, PhD, ARNP, FNP-BC**

Spring greetings! This serves as an expression of my gratitude to you, the SNRS membership, for nominating me to be your 2016-2018 Director of Communications. I assume this position with enthusiasm and with objectives to extend the communication capacities of the organization beyond what has been adeptly accomplished by my predecessors.

I would be remiss to not acknowledge the inputs of the Communication Committee whose members are instrumental in providing you with timely correspondence about SNRS



issues/news via different communication outlets. During my term, the Communication Committee and I are committed to continuing distribution of the newsletter, providing contributions to RINAH, and in the coming months increasing our brand in various Social Media outlets. We also want to provide a platform of communication for membership, which we will periodically solicit (e.g. highlighting membership accomplishments). I look forward to serving you.

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## **A Message from the SNRS Director of Awards Patricia Kinser, PhD, WHNP-BC, RN, FNAP**

The Southern Nursing Research Society offers a number of annual award opportunities to its members. The recipients of the 2016 awards are listed below. Please consider nominating yourself and/or colleagues for the 2017 awards! The call for nominations is open from August 1- October 1 each year. To learn more about the awards, please visit [here](#). Photos of the awards may be seen [here](#).

### **2016 SNRS Award Recipients**

The awards luncheon at the 2016 SNRS Annual Conference in Williamsburg, VA was a wonderful celebration of the amazing work of our members who contribute to advances in research throughout the SNRS region:

The 2016 Leadership in Research Award was given to Patricia Crane, PhD, WHNP, FAHA, FNAP of East Carolina University College of Nursing.

The 2016 Distinguished Researcher Award was given to Lynn Rew, PhD, RN, FAAN of the University of Texas at Austin.

The 2016 Award for Research in Minority Health was given to Jeannette Andrews, PhD, RN, FAAN of the University of South Carolina College of Nursing.

The 2016 Mid-Career Researcher Award is given to Suzanne Ameringer, PhD, RN of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

The 2016 Early Science Investigator Award was given to Hyochol Ahn, PhD, ANP-BC of

the University of Florida College of Nursing. Dr. Ahn is also the recipient of the Research in Nursing and Health (RINAH) Authorship Award.

The 2016 SNRS/John A. Hartford Foundation Geriatric Research Award was given to Elizabeth Galik, PhD, CRNP of the University of Maryland.

The 2016 D. Jean Wood Nursing Scholarship Award was given to Kyungeh An, PhD of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

The 2016 Clinical Researcher Award was given to Susan Houston, PhD, RN, FAAN of Baylor Scott and White Health.

Finally, three students were recognized for Top Student Poster awards at the annual conference: First place was awarded to Laurie Abbott, PhD, RN, of Florida State University College of Nursing, for her poster entitled "The Effects of a Cardiovascular Health Promotion Intervention on Rural African Americans." Second place was awarded to Taghreed Salameh, MSN, RN, of the University of Louisville School of Nursing, for her poster entitled "Predictors of Postpartum Depression among Jordanian Mothers." Third place was awarded to Udia Otuguor, RN, of Emory University, for her poster entitled "Heart Failure Family Caregiver Knowledge, Confidence, and Psychological Outcomes."

### Researcher Spotlight Martina Mueller, PhD

Originally from Germany, Dr. Mueller obtained a degree in nursing, OR specialty nursing, and an MS degree in medical informatics before coming to the United States. She was awarded a Fulbright Foundation Scholarship in 1996 for additional study of systems science and bioinformatics, receiving first an MS in biostatistics and information science in 1998 and a Ph.D. in 2003. Dr. Mueller has co-directed the data coordination and statistical analysis center for several completed large NIH-sponsored multi-center clinical trials involving mental health, and has collaborated extensively with investigators on past and currently funded VA health services and NIH projects, including community-based participatory research and work with the South Carolina Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) Technology Center to Advance Healthful Lifestyles. As an Associate Professor at the College of Nursing at the Medical University of South Carolina with a joint appointment in the Department of Public Health Sciences, her biggest role at CON/MUSC is to support faculty and students with statistical needs related to grant writing and statistical analyses for funded projects as well as support for dissertation projects. Currently she is collaborating with a former student, Dr. Leslie Parker, at the University of Florida, investigating whether the timing of expressing breast milk after delivery affects the amount produced over time. Her own research interests include predicting outcomes in premature infants using machine learning, for example, extubation outcomes for premature infants on mechanical ventilators.



#### **What influenced you to become a nurse scientist?**

Growing up in Germany and considering my career choices, my first two choices didn't work out: physical education teacher or physiotherapist. I chose nursing since it was a related field and because I really enjoyed the work while volunteering in a local hospital. My real calling came when I discovered the OR, especially working at a trauma hospital

located at the intersection of two highways in Germany (yes, the autobahn). There were accidents on a regular basis, frequently involving motorcyclists that required all types of bone surgeries.

I shifted away from nursing because of an unsatisfactory work situation that spurred me to see what else I might be interested in. - . I enrolled in a medical informatics program in Germany and it was a perfect fit. When I finished the program, I wanted to travel before settling down and was accepted for a Fulbright Scholarship in the U.S., and found another perfect fit -- Charleston and MUSC. I was able to get into the masters program and my mentor, Dr. Rebecca Knapp, took me under her wing and included me on a research team where I worked my way up from being a student doing data entry to being the co-director of the data center. She pushed me to keep moving forward and get my PhD. Eventually, I got a post doc fellowship and was then offered a faculty position..

### **What advice would you like to give an aspiring nurse scientist?**

Don't be scared of statistics! Any nurse who is smart enough to get through the boards is smart enough to understand the basics of statistics. Don't let fear keep you from moving ahead and becoming a nurse scientist. If you are open and you leave your fear at the door or at the keyboard, I don't see why any person aspiring to be a PhD in nursing wouldn't be able to master the basics of statistics. Be open and enjoy the ride!

## **Student Network Update**

Although we are happy to have had a successful conference in Williamsburg, it is time to start working on our student member goals for this year and planning for our next SNRS conference in Dallas!

I want to take this opportunity to introduce your 2016 SNRS Student Network Representatives:

Cathy Pantik- Student Network Chair, Finance Committee, Program Committee, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis  
Mercy Mumba - Secretary, University of Texas, Arlington  
Tamara Perdue- Development Committee, East Carolina University  
Timiya Nolan - Membership Committee, University of Alabama, Birmingham  
Mariya Kovaleva - Program Committee, Emory University  
Beverly Fray- Succession Planning and Nominations Committee, Florida International University  
Samantha Ransone- Communications Committee, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis

Your newly elected representatives look forward to building upon the accomplishments of those students who served in 2015. Those accomplishments include:

- First Student Member Survey
- Implemented "Student Spotlight" in Southern Connections Newsletter
- Increased Awareness of Student Network

The SNRS Student Network Goals for 2016 include:

- Create and action plan based upon feedback from the student member survey
- Increase the use of social media and email blast specifically to student members
- Improve Student Network Homepage- links, format and information available
- Increase involvement of student representatives

The purpose and mission of the Student Network is to contribute to the overall mission of the Society by:

1. Encouraging and promoting advancement of nursing research among student members of SNRS.
2. Promoting the dissemination and utilization of student research findings.
3. Facilitating the career development of student members of SNRS.
4. Enhancing communications among student members and facilitating mentorship with experienced nurse researchers.

We cannot fulfill our mission without the continued support of our student members. Thanks to all of you for your support and help in achieving our goal of making SNRS a valuable resource for your research and career development needs throughout the year.

We welcome any feedback on the goals listed above or any other thoughts you might have on how SNRS and the Student Network can better serve you and your research, networking and career goals.

Like us on Facebook and Twitter icons here

Catherine Pantik, RN, DNP student, PhD Candidate  
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### **Student Spotlight** **Maan Isabella Cajita, BSN, RN-BC** **Recipient of the CANS/SNRS Dissertation Grant**

Mia Cajita is a 3rd year PhD student at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. She graduated with a BSN from University of Illinois at Chicago and currently holds ANCC certifications in Cardiac-Vascular Nursing and Gerontological Nursing. She worked as a staff nurse on a Tele/Vent unit in a Magnet hospital in Illinois prior to moving to Baltimore. Her research interests include cardiovascular disease self-management, gerontology, health literacy, and mHealth, the sharing of health information between patients and providers using wireless and mobile devices. Mia is passionate about using nursing research to improve cardiovascular disease management practices, especially among older people with heart failure. Her dissertation, titled "mHealth Use in Older People with Heart Failure," is a mixed methods study examining potential facilitators and



barriers to mHealth adoption among older people with heart failure. She hopes to develop mHealth-based heart failure interventions in the future.

Maan Isabella Cajita, BSN, RN-BC  
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### Associate Editor's Note

While it's a cliché that spring brings us hope for new life and fresh beginnings, we nonetheless yearn for spring and the hope it brings after a long winter. This is particularly true for those of us who work in higher education and who teach on a regular basis... spring break cannot come quickly enough! I would like to add another dimension to the idea of hope that spring brings in connection to SNRS and its members. These lines excerpted from a poem by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), capture what I feel nurse researchers and working nurses do:

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

...

As I read through the copy for this spring issue of Southern Connections, I am struck by the good work being done that brings hope: Dr. Martina Mueller's work with students and faculty in statistics; Maan Isabella Cajita's work with older adults with heart failure; stellar student poster presentations; the research, advancement of knowledge, and leadership reflected in the work of award recipients; and the enthusiasm and volunteerism evident among the outgoing and incoming leaders on organizational committees. Like Dickinson, these SNRS members see the world with sharp clarity. Through their work, they never stop addressing shortcomings in health care and keep many warm with the good work that they do.

Happy Spring, everyone.

Maryellen Potts, PhD.

P.S.

Please note that the copy for the next issue of Southern Connections, the late summer issue, is due July 25 - thank you!

