



**SOUTHERN
CONNECTIONS**
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Associate Editor

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

As fall fades and we are in the midst of winter, I always like to pause and reflect on the year that passes all too quickly. This has been an amazing year serving as President of SNRS. The energy of members and especially the Board of Directors has been palpable. At the same time, it is an understatement that for some of our members, the climate has been chaotic. Hurricanes and flooding have taken a toll on some areas of our region. I have been impressed at the resiliency of individuals touched by the devastation and stand in awe of the tenacity, strength, and positive attitudes displayed as they enter the recovery phase of these disasters. I keep our impacted members in my thoughts and prayers as they rebuild not only their lives but also the education of our students and their research.

So it seems appropriate that our 32nd Annual Conference focuses on Expanding Nursing Science in Population and Global Health. We are experiencing global health issues that require global cooperation to ensure care reflects health equity among individuals. The issues are complex, get bogged down in politics, and require cooperation at many levels. Most importantly, they require a broader understanding of how interconnected we are in today's world. In the not too distant past, we saw an Ebola epidemic that crossed countries in a matter of hours and days through porous borders. Borders are no longer defined by traditional lines, walls, or maps as they once were. No wall can protect us from natural disasters and disease. Our world is interconnected with travel, communications, and technology. The idea of boundaries may actually provide a false sense of security and detachment from issues occurring in other regions and across the globe. As nurse scientists extend their scope and breadth of research to a global perspective, we see expanded research opportunities in emerging infectious diseases, environmental disaster relief, human trafficking, maternal-newborn health, health inequities, and mis-distribution of the healthcare workforce to name a few.

Our nurse scientists must become leaders in global health research. Each day brings new and greater challenges in which nurse leaders and researchers must be strong, innovated, and willing to tackle difficult and complex problems. The role of the nurse leader is key at every level including helping our SNRS organization prepare for and lead future change. As we expand our sights beyond the walls of hospitals and other healthcare settings to a broader view, we need vision, strategic thinking, and the ability to work with and influence others. I am excited that our conference focus will expand nursing science in population and global health. I congratulate the work of the Program Committee under the leadership of Carolyn Reilly for the outstanding program they have assembled. I look forward to greeting each of you in Atlanta!

Nan Smith-Blair, PhD, RN
President, SNRS

Editor's Note

Editor's Note:

Two years go by so quickly! My two-year term as Editor of SNRS Southern Connections is complete, and this is my last issue. It has been a pleasure working with all of you! Southern Connections will be in excellent hands with Dr. Maryellen Potts moving into the Editor position, and Dr. Charleen McNeill coming on board as Associate Editor. You all know Dr. Potts from her role as Associate Editor, but may not know that she recently completed a second PhD in nursing science (Medical University of South Carolina). Congratulations, Dr. Potts!

Rebecca Green, DNS, RN, NCSN

Associate Editor's Note:

I am honored to be the new Associate Editor for the Southern Connections newsletter. I received my PhD in Nursing from the University of Texas at Tyler and am currently an Assistant Professor at Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, NC. My research involves emergency preparedness among individuals and populations with increased medical needs as well as resiliency among populations and the impact health care providers have on preparedness levels. My research is comprised of many facets of emergency preparedness ranging from provider guidelines to nurse preparedness, nurse knowledge and ability to respond to disasters. What I bring to



SNRS and my new duties as the Associate Editor is a love of research and collaboration. I am very excited to learn what our fantastic members are doing in their research and helping to publicize their endeavors. I look forward to working with each of the RIGs to amplify their endeavors among our members through Southern Connections. I am here to facilitate the needs of the members of SNRS in any way I can!!! I look forward to the next two years in this capacity-- I'm proud to be here and ready to serve!

Charleen McNeill, PhD, MSN, RN

2018 Annual Conference

SNRS 32nd Annual Conference, Atlanta GA: Pre-Conferences and CDC Tour

Have you finalized your plans for attending the SNRS 32nd Annual Conference in Atlanta, March 21-24, 2018, "Expanding Nursing Science in Population and Global Health"? Plan to join us starting Wednesday, March 21st for our new programming schedule. We will be offering eight pre-conferences, four sessions in the morning and four in the afternoon, and two CDC tours. For the first time, the full conference will begin at 4 pm on Wednesday with the Top Student Poster Discussion Session as our opening plenary.

Developing nurse scientists is at the heart of the SNRS mission. To support this mission we have moved the Top 10 Student Poster Discussion Session to launch our meeting as the opening plenary, Wednesday, 4-5:30 pm, which is included in all full conference registrations. Come see what our burgeoning scientists are studying and cheer them on for this prestigious award!

Are you a new member of SNRS or a SNRS Student Member? Join us after the opening plenary, Top 10 Student Poster Discussion Session, for the Student / New Member Reception in the Garden Courtyard, 5:30-6:30 pm.

We have planned an exciting line up of new pre-conferences this year, in addition to our usual annual Doctoral Student Workshop, and Writing for Publication. Additionally, for the second year we will be offering the Undergraduate Research Symposium along with the following exciting pre-conferences:

- **Mentoring and Being Mentored:** Designed for the early and mid-stage research faculty to make the most of the mentor-mentee relationship by focusing on core elements of mentoring, defining/ aligning expectations, enhancing communication, and research self-efficacy.

- Environmental Exposure and Environmental Justice: Applications of existing measurements and models in nursing research and practice: Organized using the socio-ecological model, dive into a research toolbox of environmental and occupational exposures to assess complex symptom, phenotype characterization, biomarker discovery, and research/ clinical applications.
- Merging Education and Practice Program Grants with Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR): Discuss the purpose and research opportunities of Education and practice grants, how to engage community agencies in CBPR by focusing on value-based population health approach, and discuss funding sources, support mechanisms and avoidance of pitfalls.
- Reproducible Research Pipelines Using R and RStudio: Focused on the principles and tools needed to create and easily reproduced process for data handling, cleaning, and analysis all dynamically linked to reporting and manuscript dissemination.
- Meta-syntheses of Human Genome and Epigenetic Studies: Understand the purposes and processes of meta-analytics to appraise research evidence in human genome health and epigenetics/omics research including various databases.

What would a visit to Atlanta be without a tour of the CDC? The local planning committee has arranged for a guided tour including coach transportation for the low cost of \$20. Come learn why the CDC is headquartered in Atlanta, what CDC measures in its tobacco laboratory, and how the CDC helped NASA during the Apollo 11 moon mission! You can either plan to attend the 9am or the 10am tour (tours commence an hour later at the CDC). The tour is two hours in length and signup/payment is required at time of registration. Space is limited to only 30 spots on each tour and we must have you pre-registered and paid to hold your spot.

Check out the SNRS website for the latest information on programming, registration, conference planning, travel, and the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel. Reserve your spot now as you will not want to miss the Annual Conference in Atlanta!

Carolyn Miller Reilly, PhD, RN, CHFN-K, CNE, FAHA
SNRS Vice President and Program Committee Chair

RIG Corner

The Biobehavioral Research Interest Group(RIG) is focused on advancing nursing knowledge related to the interactions

between biology and behavior to improve human health. The Biobehavioral RIG serves the members of SNRS by providing opportunities for collaboration, education, and peer support in the development of research, funding, and publication. The annual RIG forum serves members by helping them examine state-of-the-art methodologies, approaches, and theories that will provide new directions in studying complex clinical problems. During the annual meeting, the distinguished biobehavioral research lectureship provides RIG members with exemplary research updates. Active communication occurs among members beyond the annual meeting via webinars and group chats using the social media platforms.

The biobehavioral RIG currently has more than 200 members with Dr. Kyungeh An, Virginia Commonwealth University, serving as a chair and Dr. Brittany Butts, University of Alabama, as co-chair. The leadership team is focusing on building mentorship opportunities between novice and experienced biobehavioral investigators and on initiating national and international collaborations on biobehavioral research.

Participation in RIG activities is a great opportunity for those who wish to expand their mentorship role or obtain mentorship from outside of their own institution. Engaging in these activities will also enrich your collaboration in the service of promoting human health.

We hope more SNRS members join the SNRS 2018 and the biobehavioral RIG.

Dr. Kyungeh An
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Dr. Brittany Butts
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Senior Researcher Spotlight Dr. Jean McSweeney, PhD, RN

Dr. Jean McSweeney is a professor and Associate Dean for Research at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas. She received her BSN from Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, her MSN from The University of Texas at Arlington, and her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. She has served on the National Institute of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research Advisory Council. She is a Fellow in both the American Heart Association and the



American Academy of Nursing.

Dr. McSweeney is a research pioneer in the field of women's cardiovascular disease and published the first study that described women's symptoms of heart disease. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the American Heart Association's Katharine A. Lembright Award, the 2011 Southern Nursing Research Society's Distinguished Researcher Award, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences 2015 Graduate School Faculty of the Year Award. She is also a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing and a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Texas at Arlington.

What influenced you to become a nurse scientist?

There were two primary reasons I became a nurse scientist. First, I had faculty who believed in me and encouraged me to continue my education. Being the first person in my immediate family to attend college, I had not considered getting an advanced degree. However, Dr. Joyce Taylor Harden, my primary professor in my RN-BSN program, highly encouraged me to continue my education. I elected to pursue my MSN two years later and was again highly influenced by my thesis chair, Dr. Lorrie Hegstead. She strongly encouraged me to seek a PhD. Two years later I enrolled in my PhD program. Once in the PhD program, my dissertation chair, Dr. Janet Allan, had a profound impact on my career. Janet encouraged me to pursue research that built upon my strong clinical background of critical care nursing. She helped me to see how these could be combined. I began to realize the substantial impact that research findings exert on developing the optimal interventions to guide clinical practice. This realization allowed me to transition from being a critical care nurse pursuing my PhD to becoming a nurse scientist committed to improving clinical outcomes of many, not just my own patients. Although this seems like it should be an easy transition, it was not because I truly loved practicing as a critical care nurse. However, once I completed my first qualitative study, I realized my practice was now incorporating health experiences from patients into research findings and disseminating these results to improve care for many. My research trajectory was firmly established after interviewing and listening to women's troubling symptoms and diagnostic experiences associated with coronary heart disease. Assisting women worldwide to have their symptoms recognized and treated appropriately became and continues to be the driving reason for me to continue to pursue my research as a nurse scientist. So, my second major influence stemmed from my research participants. I remain grateful to my faculty mentors who encouraged and challenged me to pursue this rewarding and often demanding career and to my research participants who allowed me into their lives to learn from their experiences.

What advice would you give to aspiring nurse scientists?

My best advice is:

1. Build upon your areas of strength and expertise and find a research area that you are willing to invest your time and energy. We are in a period of very limited funding and it is easy to get discouraged. Your love for your topic and your determination to make a difference in health outcomes related to your topic are absolutely essential to see you through lean times.
2. Find a mentor(s) and invest in this relationship. Be a responsible mentee, meaning listen to their advice, follow-through on suggestions, set and keep regular meetings, and be prepared to discuss the topic at hand. Do not waste his/her time and be respectful of the time he/she devotes to assisting you to

succeed.

3. Do not be afraid to change methods. To make a difference, follow where your results take you. Learn more, select excellent collaborators, and establish a give and take collaborative relationship. Learn from each other -- no one is BEST at everything!!
4. PUBLISH -- Conducting research and not publishing results is wasting your participants' time and money that funded your research. Build upon your results, one step at a time. You will make a difference
5. Always remember why you do the research. It is ultimately about helping your participants to achieve better health outcomes.

Student Network

"When we read, it is not ours to absorb all that is written. Our thoughts are jealous and they constantly blank out the thoughts of others, for there is not room enough in us for two scents at one time." This is the quote by Milorad Pavic that comes to my mind when I think about attending scientific conferences, including SNRS. Conferences are a way to shake some of our old, comfort zone ideas with new and thought-provoking and surprising concepts and boost our creativity.

As students, attending conferences may be costly and I sometimes think that in two days I may read more papers on my own than learn about in a scientific meeting. But, conferences are the best way to engage your senses with absorbing new, creative, perplexing, and elegant solutions with a speed and intensity that is faster than doing the work yourself. I always return from the SNRS conference filled with energy; maybe the ideas are not formed yet, but the influx of new thinking is worth the cost and work it takes us to attend and maintain SNRS membership. Furthermore, it is not only the research, but the people who you meet who may shape or alter your career in some way. Belonging to a professional organization such as SNRS helps us build our professional identities and enhances our professional status.

This year, the SNRS Student Network is planning to host a Doctoral Student Workshop with three speakers: Dr. Fayron Epps, PhD, RN, from Georgia State University, Dr. Glenna Brewster, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, from Emory University, and Dr. Pamela Ashcraft, PhD, RN, from the University of Central Arkansas. Dr. Epps and Dr. Brewster will speak about nurse scientist careers, formulating research questions, successful dissertation writing, publications, securing funding, planning post-doctoral training, and strategies for faculty position job search. They will also discuss carving an area of research, networking, and the essentials of applications for faculty positions. We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta in 2018!

Sincerely,

Mariya Kovaleva, RN, BSN, PhD Candidate, MSN Candidate
Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
Emory University

Student Spotlight
Kaitlin Voights, RN, BSN

My name is Kaitlin Voights, RN, BSN. I received my BS in Nursing from the University of Kentucky in 2015, and presently work as a critical care nurse and a graduate research assistant. Currently, I am a second year PhD student in the University of Kentucky's College of Nursing. My research interests include chronic disease prevention and the genetic impact of racial and ethnic discrimination, and are inspired by the patients I care for at the bedside. In the future, I hope to pursue a career as a nurse scientist at an academic medical center and to conduct meaningful research that has the ability to improve chronic disease prevention efforts.



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