Three students associated with the School of Nursing received SURF* Awards. **Ms. Shaina Forte** received an award for *How Early Life Stressors Alter the Gut Microbiome of Preterm Infants, as Measured by a New Tool: the Accumulated Pain/Stressor Scale*. Her mentor is **Dr. Xiaomei Cong**. **Ms. Roxanne Lapierre** received an award for *Direct Paternal Participation in Bottle Feeding and its Effects on Feeding Patterns of Full-Term Infants*. Her mentor is **Dr. Ruth Lucas**. **Ms. Laura Mandell** received an award for *Weight and Age as Predictors of Persistent Infant Car Seat Challenge Failure*. Her mentor is **Dr. Jacqueline McGrath**.

*The UConn Summer Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF) supports full-time undergraduate students in summer research or creative projects. SURF project proposals are reviewed by a faculty committee representing various Schools and Colleges, and SURF award recipients are chosen through a competitive process. The maximum total amount awarded for a SURF application is $4,000 ($3,500 stipend for the student researcher and up to $500 for consumables associated with the research project).*

**Dr. Deborah Shelton** received a $2,850 award for *Research in the Era of Mass Incarceration* through the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS). The funding was provided to bring stakeholders together to highlight opportunities for cross-disciplinary research in correctional health.

**Dorothy Vittner, MSN, RN**, received a $5,000 grant award from the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN) for “Bio-behavioral Mechanisms During Maternal and Paternal Skin to Skin Contact with Preterm Infants.” The aims of the study are to address the critical gap and increase understanding of the mechanisms that link parent-infant contact to bio-behavioral responses, and to identify strategies that might be used in the future to enhance endogenous oxytocin levels in mothers, fathers and infants.

**Grant Applications**

**Dr. Xiaomei Cong** applied through DNA Genotek for *Brain-Gut-Microbiota Signaling System in Regulation of Early Life Experience*. The project will extend her current study and will include follow-up gut microbiome data of infants at each month until their 8 month corrected age (CA). A prospective longitudinal design will be used to examine associations of infant neurodevelopmental outcomes at 4 and 8-months CA with early life stress in the NICU and with infant gut microbiome patterns both in the NICU and at follow-up times. The request is for $10,000.

**Amy D’Agata, MS, BSN, RN**, applied for *Extending Our Knowledge of Relationships Between FKBP5 and Early Life Stress in the NICU*, through the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN). The goal of the project is to explore the relationship between a stress response-associated gene’s (FKBP5) single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) and behavioral phenotype of altered neurobehavioral development; the relationship between extremes of stressful NICU experiences and neurobehavioral outcomes at 35 weeks PMA (post-menstrual age); and whether variants of the FKBP5 gene moderate the associations between stressful NICU events and neurobehavioral outcomes at 35 weeks PMA. The request is for $5,000.

**Dr. Desiree Diaz**, submitted a *TeamSTEPPS® Simulation Approach to Train the Trainer on Missed Care in Correctional Healthcare Facilities*, an R18 application, to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The aim in this study is to determine if enhanced communication facilitated by TeamSTEPPS® training and simulation increases patient safety through decreased missed care in a correctional environment. The request is for $747,988.
Cynthia French, CRNA, submitted **Effect of Labor Epidural Analgesia with Hydro morphone on Breastfeeding and Neonatal Neurobehavioral Outcomes** to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation. The primary purpose of this study is to assess breastfeeding and neonatal neurobehavior in neonates whose mothers have received a continuous epidural infusion of bupivacaine (local anesthetic) and hydro- morphone (narcotic) for labor pain in comparison with neonates whose mothers have not received epidural analgesia. A secondary purpose of the study is to determine whether there is a relationship between the duration of continuous epidural infusion and breastfeeding or neurobehavioral outcomes. The request is for $4,600.

**Dr. Michelle Judge** submitted **Nutrigenomics and Postpartum Depression: Role of N-3 Long Chain Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids in Modulating the Genetic Expression of Key Inflammatory Targets** to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This investigation uses proteomics to evaluate differential genetic expression of key inflammatory markers and postpartum depressive symptoms in women supplemented with omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids compared to a placebo group. The request is for $5,000.

Dr. Michelle Judge submitted a letter of intent to the March of Dimes describing a proposal for **Associations of Metabolic Stress with Maternal-Oral and Placental Microbiome Composition: Implications for Preterm Birth**. The study will determine if maternal-oral samples and maternal-placental samples of infants born preterm have a higher level of inflammatory markers (TLR4 and inflammatory cytokines) and differential microbiota composition compared to maternal-oral and maternal-placental samples of infants born at term. No budget request.

Dr. Annette Jakubisin Konicki submitted an application for HQ-U: HealthQuest YouUniversity of Heart Health, a subaward on the Northeast District Department of Health’s application to the Foundation for NIH & NHLBI. The primary aims of the study are to explore and understand the women’s experiences of participating in the community initiative for heart health, and to identify those effectiveness-based implementations of the evidence-based guidelines that may serve as foundational to future initiatives. The request is for $9,596.

**Dr. Kelley Newlin Lew** applied for **Pilot Randomized Trial of a Combined Diabetes Prevention & Self-Management Intervention** through the American Nurses Foundation. This study will test a combined T2D prevention and self-management intervention in a trusted community setting, a church diabetes clinic. T2D prevention and self-management interventions will be combined and tested in terms of its effect on physical and mental health outcomes as well as how participants and nurses, experience the interventions in based on receiving or delivering it, respectively. The request is for $4,995.

**Dr. Kelley Newlin Lew** applied for **A Pilot Randomized Trial of a Combined Diabetes Intervention & Self-Management in Nicaragua** through the STTI Global Nursing Research Grant. The purpose of the proposed study is to test a church-based, combined type 2 diabetes (T2D) prevention and self-management intervention targeting Nicaraguan ethnic minorities with or at-risk for T2D using a pilot randomized trial (RCT) design with a mixed-methods approach. The proposed study will contribute to nursing science by increasing knowledge about nurse-led T2D prevention and self-management. The request is for $12,000.

**Dr. Kelley Newlin Lew** applied for a Larson Fellowship in Health and Spirituality through the Library of Congress. Her proposed project is titled **Social Forces and Religious Care for the Underserved with Chronic Disease**. The purpose of the study is to examine publically funded contributions of religious organizations to non-communicable chronic disease care for the underserved with attention to contemporaneous public health resources, public and lay opinion, and interpretation of church and state doctrine. While addressing gaps in knowledge, the proposed study will contribute to an informed scholarly debate over evolving US health policy as it pertains to church and state doctrine and NCCD care for the underserved. The request is for $37,800.
Dr. Thomas Long applied for Hartford Subscription Publishing and Civil War Nurse Narratives: Documenting Marketing and Readership, from the American Association for the History of Nursing. The aim of the project is to document the methods and networks that three Hartford, Connecticut, subscription publishers employed to market Civil War nurse narratives: Emma Edmonds’s Nurse and Spy in the Union Army (W.S. Williams, 1865), Frank Moore’s Women of the War (S.S. Scranton, 1867), and Mary Livermore’s My Story of the War (A.D. Worthington, 1890). The request is for $3,104.

Dr. Ruth Lucas submitted a letter of intent for Maternal Description of Breastfeeding Behavior in Children Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder to the Organization for Autism Research. The aim of the project is to explore the relationships between maternal report using the Maternal Assessment of Infant Breastfeeding Behaviors (MAIBB-R) instrument, maternal breastfeeding questionnaire, and maternal recall of breastfeeding duration. No budget request.

Dr. Erin Young submitted Connecticut Hartford Opioid Induced Euphoria Study (CHOIES) to the Hood Foundation with Dr. Renee Manworren of Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. The primary aim of this study is to determine whether variation within our candidate genes of interest conveys risk for opioid-induced euphoria in a population of drug naïve adolescents. The request is for $25,056.

Dr. Annette Maruca submitted CT Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Health Professions Training Program with Dr. Bonnie McRee from the UCHC Department of Community Medicine and Health Care, to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The purpose of the project is to develop and implement training programs to teach students in health profession disciplines (physician assistants, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, counselors, and medical students and residents) the skills necessary to provide evidence-based screening and brief intervention, and refer patients who are at risk for a substance use disorder (SUD) to appropriate treatment. The request is for $59,458.

Dr. Carol Polifroni applied to the Office of Minority Health Pipeline Program for Husky Honors Health Academy H3. The goal of the program is to enhance the diversity of the health care workforce through establishment of an Honors Health Academy (H3) within the existing Academy of Nursing & Health Sciences at Hartford Public High School, and an H3 at UConn and its regional campuses. By enhancing the diversity of the workforce, the long term outcome is a decrease in health disparities and health inequities in the United States health care delivery system. The request is for $2,253,590.

Dr. Deborah Shelton submitted a letter of intent to the Rita & Alex Hillman Foundation for CareLink-C: Reducing Barriers to Health Care for Marginalized Populations. The aim of this proposal is to implement CareLink-C, a person-centered, holistic and strengths-based reentry intervention care model, in new Connecticut Department of Correction (CDOC) Reintegration Units. This nurse-driven model is implemented by inter-professional teams of students to address: (a) clients’ mental and physical wellness; (b) clients’ capacity to engage in self-care behavior; and (c) improved coordination of services to improve the reentry experience and retention in the community. No budget request.

Dorothy Vittner, MSN, RN, applied to the American Nurses Foundation for Biobehavioral Mechanisms during Skin to Skin Contact with Preterm Infants. The purpose of the study is to examine biological and behavioral effects of skin to skin contact looking at the premature infant in context of their family with skin to skin holding by their mother and father. The request is for $4,997.


Alexander, I. M. (2015, February). Mentoring Student Development through Integration in a Scholarly Project: A Case Example of Student and Faculty Productivity. Poster presentation, American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Master’s Conference, St Petersburg, FL.


Long, T. L. (2015, April). *AIDS and Culture at the Fin D’autre Siècle*. English Department, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.


Van Hoof, T. J. (2015, April). Improving Continuing Education: Insights from Quality Improvement, Adult Learning, and Health Professions Education. Medical Education Grand Rounds. Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. New York, NY.