RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Preparing 21st-Century Nurses to Promote Health and Wellness in Our Community and Around the World

HEALTH.USF.EDU/NURSING/RESEARCH
At the USF College of Nursing we are actively engaged in innovative nursing science and research that builds the knowledge base and impacts advanced nursing practice, interdisciplinary practice, and health policy.

Usha Menon, PhD, RN, FAAN
Vice Dean of Research, College of Nursing
Professor, College of Nursing

Meet the Vice Dean of Research

NIH Funding

#1 ranked for NIH Funding among all universities in Florida; #22 in the Nation
Research Areas of Expertise

- Acute & Critical Care
- Biobehavioral Mechanisms
- Biostatistics, Big Data
- Cancer Prevention & Management
- Caregiver Support
- Chronic Illness Management
- Complementary & Alternative Therapies
- Digital Interventions & Virtual Support
- Health Disparities
- Heart Health
- Medication Adherence
- Microbiology, Immunology & Microbiome
- Oral Care Intervention
- Pediatric Mental Health
- Psychoneuroimmunology
- Randomized Control Trials
- Symptom Management
- Translation and Dissemination Research

Currently Funded Research Projects

- A Clinical Trial of Decision Support for End-of-Life Care Among Surrogate Decision Makers of the Chronically Critically Ill
- Accelerated Resolution Therapy for Treatment of Complicated Grief in Senior Adults
- Chronic Toxoplasma gondii, Pregnancy Reactivation, and Perinatal Depression
- Efficacy of MBSR Treatment of Cognitive Impairment Among Breast Cancer Survivors
- Fatigue and the Gut Microbiome of Patients Receiving Chemoradiotherapy for Rectal Cancer
- i-Corps: A Mobile Health Secondary Prevention Program for Women with Heart Disease
- Predictors of Weight Loss Failure and Regain in Bariatric Patients
- The Preterm Infant Microbiome: Biological, Behavioral, & Health Outcomes at 2 and 4 years of Age
Nursing Biobehavioral Research Lab

Opened in May 2009, the Biobehavioral Research Lab consists of more than 2,000 dedicated square feet of space. The laboratory contains state-of-the-art equipment, including an Illumina MiSeq for next generation sequencing, for studying microbiome assemblies, measuring RNA transcriptomes, and conducting blood assays such as inflammatory markers, stress hormones, proteomics, and RNA and DNA analyses.

The lab also contains multiple patient rooms for conducting physical examinations, clinical measurements, and treatment interventions for health care and research purposes as well as carrelled spaces for students and technicians and an additional tissue culture room.

For more information, contact:

Maureen Groer, PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor, Gordon Keller Professorship
Adjunct Professor, College of Medicine
Executive Director, Biobehavioral Laboratory
mgroer@health.usf.edu
(813) 974-2703
[VIDEO] USF Health highlights Nursing Biobehavioral Lab
Admissions Requirements

- Applicants must complete both the NursingCAS and USF Graduate Application
- BS, MS or Clinical Doctorate in Nursing from a regionally accredited program*
- 3.00 GPA
- Competitive GRE scores
- Clear potential for research contributions
- Curriculum vitae
- Demonstrated commitment to doctoral study and scholarly productivity
- Evidence of potential for leadership in nursing profession
- Licensure as an RN if performing clinical work
- Three letters of recommendation
- Written statement of professional goals
- Prerequisite: NGR 7848 or equivalent prior to full time enrollment

*Applicants with degrees in other fields may also be considered

The PhD program prepares graduates to:

- Conduct original research that informs practice and health policy;
- Apply professional and research ethics and judgment in the conduct of research;
- Disseminate research findings to lay and professional audiences and identify implications for policy, nursing practice and the profession;
- Use innovative approaches to advance nursing science;
- Enact the evolving roles and responsibilities of a nurse scientist;
- Contribute to team science and interdisciplinary collaborations;
- Provide leadership to community, professional, and scientific organizations; and
- Contribute to a global, interprofessional or interdisciplinary community of scholars.
PhD Program Calendar

Starting with Fall 2017, the USF Nursing PhD program has adopted an executive format program calendar. The new format allows students to earn a PhD in Nursing Science at a pace that fits their life. With a DNP, students can complete the degree in as little as two years.

Meeting three times during 15-week semesters, PhD courses combine intensive on-campus experiences supplemented with online and distance activities. Two-thirds of course contact time occurs on campus. Fall and Spring semesters include a week-long intensive session and two weekend mini sessions. Summer semesters include only weekend mini sessions. Dates of the in-class sessions are announced in advance, and published online.

For more information, visit NurseScientist.health.usf.edu

PhD student Sarah Perron studies effects of interruptions on cognitive load during medication administration using monitors.
Program Curriculum

Knowledge Building Core (Required) (33 credits)
NGR 7111 Disciplinary Perspectives of Nursing Science (3)
NGR 7125 Model Development for Nursing (3)
NGR 7810 Design, Measurement, and Analysis in Nursing Research I (3)
NGR 7812 Design, Measurement, and Analysis in Nursing Research II (3)
NGR 7813 Design, Measurement, and Analysis in Nursing Research III (3)
NGR 7814 Design, Measurement, and Analysis in Nursing Research IV (3)
NGR 7881 Responsible Conduct of Research (2)
NGR 7930 Scientific Inquiry Forum (1) - required each semester prior to candidacy (Minimum 4 credits)
NGR 7837 Innovative Programs in Biobehavioral Research (3)
NGR 7838 Innovative Programs in Symptom Management Research (3)
NGR 7954 Communicating Nursing Science (3)

Advance Directed Research (Minimum 3 Credits)
Specialized individual participation in research activity, including but not limited to pilot studies and other investigative activities.

Cognate (Minimum 9 Credits)
Students select a cognate area to further support the student’s area of expertise in nursing and the research problem that will be addressed by the dissertation research. Examples of appropriate areas of study for the cognate might be organizational administration, health policy, physiology, cognitive psychology, organizational psychology, gerontology, epidemiology, biostatistics, administration, applied anthropology, educational measurement or a nursing specialty.

Qualifying Examinations
The qualifying examination is completed after the majority of core and minor coursework is completed. The purpose of the qualifying examination is to assess the student’s level of scholarship and research skills and to determine if the student possesses the critical and analytical skills necessary to undertake the dissertation research. The qualifying examination consists of a one-day written exam covering core and specialty content.

Dissertation (Minimum 12 Credits)
Students must complete and successfully defend a dissertation.
Program Entry Points and Requirements
All entry points must complete NGR 7848: Fundamentals of Statistics or an equivalent graduate statistics course prior to enrollment in PhD-level coursework.

Clinical Doctorate to PhD (Minimum 45 Credit Hours)
Students entering with an approved clinical doctorate may not need to complete the Advanced Directed Research or Cognate courses. Clinical Doctorate students must still fulfill the qualifying exam and dissertation research requirements.

Masters to PhD (Minimum 57 Credit Hours)
Students must complete the full curriculum as listed. Credits may be transferred, as per committee and program approval.

Bachelors to PhD (Minimum 87 Credit Hours)
A minimum of 30 hrs beyond the MS-PhD curriculum is required. The additional coursework must be approved by the student’s supervising committee. These 30 hours should provide students with the foundational knowledge to conduct their proposed research. Students may complete the requirements for a master’s degree as they work towards completing the PhD. In such cases, students can only select concentrations currently available in the college and as approved by the PhD program and must abide by all master’s degree curriculum and progression policies.

Alternatively, students may opt for a tailored plan of study developed in collaboration with their advisor and supervising committee. A minimum of 18 hours must be in an identifiable area of emphasis. Examples include entrepreneurship, informatics, medical sciences, and public health.

For assistance with the application process, please contact:

Xavier Ramos
Graduate Admissions Advisor
xramos@health.usf.edu
(813) 974-2191
Financial Aid Opportunities

**USF Graduate Fellowship**
Offers a stipend and paid in-state tuition for the first two semesters. Must be newly admitted full-time enrolled PhD Nursing students. All new applicants are automatically considered; no application is required.

**College of Nursing Research Fellowship**
Offers a paid research assistantship appointment and paid in-state tuition for 2 years for newly admitted full-time PhD Nursing students. This fellowship is available every other year. All new applicants are automatically considered; no application is required.

**College of Nursing Dorothy Benjamin Research Fellowship**
Offers a paid research assistantship appointment and in-state tuition for 2 years - only offered once every two years; requires full-time enrollment. Also provides small expense account for research posters, etc. Student's research must be in an area that, “improves the care for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or other memory disorders.” Submit a one-page essay on how your research plans match the donor's intention. Deadline is July 1st for a fall semester start. Submit to the College of Nursing Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation.

**College of Nursing Vardell Endowed Scholarship**
Offers $7,500/year based on financial need. Must be full-time enrolled and practicing nursing in Pinellas County and/or promise to practice nursing in Pinellas County upon graduation. Submit a one-page essay on how your plans match the donor’s intention of “promoting nursing education and practice in Pinellas County.” Deadline is July 1st. Submit to the College of Nursing Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Innovation.

**Jonas Nurse Leader and Jonas Veterans Healthcare Scholars**
Offers $20,000 in total funding over 6 academic semesters and up to $2,500 to attend AACN leadership conference. Nominated students will provide an essay; committee selection will be announced on or before June 1st. Offered every other year.

**Graduate Assistantships**
The College of Nursing offers graduate teaching assistantships and research assistantships to qualified students. Each graduate assistantship includes a full in-state tuition waiver, stipend, and health insurance plan. Availability may vary per semester.

**Nurse Faculty Loan Program**
Number of awardees varies each year due to federal release of funds; US citizen only. Up to $15,000/year with up to 85% loan forgiveness upon graduation provided the applicant secures a full-time faculty position at a university or college in the U.S. This is offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

**State of Florida Nurse Educator Program**
Offers $3,500/semester for 6 consecutive semesters for new fall students who enroll full-time. Requires a commitment to teach three years in the State of Florida post-graduation. Application available here.

*The USF Office of Graduate Studies offers additional financial aid opportunities. For more information, please visit their website.*
Assistant professor and alumna Jessica Gordon, PhD, continues her research in the biobehavioral laboratory.
PONRATHI ATHILINGAM  
PhD, ACNP, MCH, FAANP, FHFSA  
Associate Professor

Research Interests

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator, Mobile phone application (Heart Mapp) intervention development to improve self-care in heart failure, funded by Florida High-Tech Corridor, CS Draper Laboratory, and National Science Foundation Innovation-Corps.

Click to read a feature story on Dr. Athilingam’s journey to nursing and research.

Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
- Johanna Wilson. Prognostication and decision-making analysis in high-risk cardiac patients.

Current PhD Student Research
- Bradlee Jenkins. Evaluating technology-based intervention for patients with pulmonary disorder.

Dr. Athilingam was highlighted in the March 2015 Florida High Tech Corridor magazine for HeartMapp sensor-enabled technology.

Dr. Athilingam discusses the HeartMapp application developed by her NSF-funded Innovation Corps team.
Theresa M. Beckie
PhD, RN, FAHA
Professor

Research Interests
Women's cardiovascular health, behavior change interventions; quality of life; depressive symptoms and psychosocial risk factors; genetic determinants of heart disease; cardiac rehabilitation; secondary prevention; mobile health technology.

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator. A mobile health secondary prevention program for women with heart disease, funded by Women in Leadership & Philanthropy Faculty Research Award

Co-investigator. Cardio-oncology intervention on cardiovascular health in women with breast cancer, funded by USF Women's Health Collaborative.

Co-investigator. Apixaban for early prevention of embolic stroke and hemorrhagic transformation, funded by Bristol-Meyers Squibb.

Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
- Sierra Gower. Effect of intra-operative tight glycemic control on surgical site infection rates in patients undergoing coronary artery bypass graft surgery.
- Jennifer Cline. The association between FAMC polymorphism and coronary heart disease in women.
- Pao-Chu Hsu. Prenatal stress, depression, and Herpes viral reactivation.
- Allyson Radford. Depression in female veterans.
- Lisa Huhn Parnell. Potential protective effect of Rhesus D positive blood factor on Toxoplasma-related depressive symptoms in pregnancy.

Dr. Beckie discusses 2016 AHA findings and statement on women's heart health with FOX13.

Click to View
CHRISTINA BRICKER
PhD, APRN, FAHA
Assistant Professor

Research Interests
Cardiovascular disease; health disparities; genetics.

Current Research Projects
Multiple Principal Investigator (Kip, co-MPI), Accelerated Resolution Therapy for Treatment of Complicated Grief in Senior Adults funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Co-principal investigator, Phase II Proposal NSF I/UCRC Center for Health Organization (CHOT), funded by the National Science Foundation.

Selected Publications


Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
- Jacqueline Gordon. Postoperative glycemic control in the cardiac surgery.
- Lindsey Peterson. End of Life Decision-making in Families.

Current PhD Student Research
- Angelica Bernal. Cardiovascular studies
- Vanessa Burshnic. USF Dept. of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Communicating care decisions in Dementia
- Tina Mason. Quality of life in senior adult caregivers after dyadic dissolution
- Rachel Wells, UAB, Examining Dose in an early palliative care psychoeducational intervention for advanced Heart Failure patients and caregivers (Robert Wood Johnson Scholar)

Call for Action:
Nurses Lead and Transform Palliative Care
Approved by ANA Board of Directors
March 13, 2017
Developed in Partnership With Organizational Affiliate
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association

HARLEAH G. BUCK
PhD, RN, FPCN, FAAN
Associate Professor
Coordinator, Chronic Illnesses Initiatives

Research Interests
Dyadic decision making in heart failure self care; recovery from dyadic dissolution after death of care partner; technology usage in community based heart failure management; health care innovation.

Current Research Projects
Multiple Principal Investigator (Kip, co-MPI), Accelerated Resolution Therapy for Treatment of Complicated Grief in Senior Adults funded by the National Institute on Aging.
Co-principal investigator, Phase II Proposal NSF I/UCRC Center for Health Organization (CHOT), funded by the National Science Foundation.
Selected Publications


Research Interests

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) self-care;
behavior change interventions using eHealth/mHealth;
psychometric testing; applied statistical approaches;
symptom management.

Current Research Projects

Exploring perceived importance and efficacy of self-care behaviors in people with COPD.
PAULA CAIRNS
PhD, RN
Assistant Professor

Research Interests
Critical care interventions for families, patients, and nurses; Post Intensive Care Syndrome in patients (PICS) and family members (PICS-F); Quality of Life in ICU survivors and their families; Sleep and Communication in the ICU environment.

Current Research Projects
Principal Investigator for PICS-F intervention pilot study.

Selected Publications


ALLYSON R. DUFFY  
PhD, RN  
Assistant Professor

Research Interests
Psychoneuroimmunology; *Toxoplasma gondii*; Women's health; Maternal-Child health.

Current Research Projects
Co-investigator, Chronic *Toxoplasma gondii*, pregnancy reactivation, and perinatal depression, funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Selected Publications


Selected Publications


MAUREEN GROER  
PhD, RN, FAAN  
Professor, Gordon Keller Professorship  
Executive Director, Biobehavioral Laboratory  
Adjunct Professor, College of Medicine

Research Interests  
Biobehavioral mechanisms; microbiology, immunology, and microbiome; psychoneuroimmunology.

Current Research Projects  
Principal investigator, Chronic Toxoplasma gondii, pregnancy reactivation, and perinatal depression, funded by the National Institutes of Health.  
Principal investigator, The preterm infant microbiome: Biological, behavioral, and health outcomes at 2 and 4 years of age, funded by the National Institutes of Health.  
Site principal investigator, The microbiome as a potential mediator of socio-economic disparities in preterm infant neurodevelopmental trajectories from NICU discharge to school age, funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Selected Publications  


Previous PhD Students  
Lisa Huhn. Relationship of RH factor to Toxoplasma gondii related depression in pregnancy.  
Ivonne Hernandez. Acculturation, self-efficacy and breastfeeding behavior in a sample of Hispanic women.  
Jessica Gordon. Skin to skin contact and oxytocin secretion in lactating mothers of premature infants.

Current PhD Student Research  
Lauren Wright. Psychoneuroimmunology.

[VIDEO] Dr. Groer leads five-year study to examine connection between digestive tract microbes and health and development.
**MING JI**  
PhD  
Professor, Biostatistics

**Research Interests**  
Big data; randomized controlled trials; medical diagnostic and screening tests; health behaviors.

**Current Research Projects**  
Site principal investigator, Predictors of weight loss failure and regain in bariatric patients, subcontract with Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research, funded by the National Institutes of Health.  
Co-investigator, The preterm infant microbiome: biological, behavioral, and health outcomes at 2 and 4 years of age, funded by the National Institutes of Health.  
Co-investigator, Reorientation intervention for delirium in the ICU, funded by the National Institute for Nursing Research.

**Selected Publications**


Selected Publications


Research Interests
Behavioral factors, such as stress and depression, and their effect on the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Current Research Projects
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) R01 DK119478-01 (Ritchie).

Co-Investigator, Enhanced enrollment in the National Diabetes Prevention Program for the underserved: a randomized controlled trial.
CECILE LENGACHER
PhD, RN, FAAN, FAPOS
Professor, Pre-doctoral Fellowship
Program Director

Research Interests
Psychoneuroimmunology; psycho-oncology; complementary alternative bio-behavioral therapy; symptom management; and health care costs research among cancer survivors and caregivers.

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator: Efficacy of MBSR treatment on cognitive impairment among breast cancer survivors, funded by the National Cancer Institute (R01 CA199160-01).

Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
- Carissa Alinat. Genetic moderation of pain and fatigue symptoms resulting from the mindfulness-based stress reduction for breast cancer program.
- Carly Paterson. Sexual functioning & body image in younger breast cancer survivors.

Current PhD Student Research
- Jennifer Miller. Depression and cognitive impairment among breast cancer patients.
- Katherine Lin. The relationship between cardiotoxicity and cognitive impairment among breast cancer patients who received chemotherapy.

Dr. Lengacher discusses mindfulness-based stress reduction research for breast cancer survivors with News13 Orlando.
DENISE MAGUIRE  
PhD, RN, CNL, FAAN  
Associate Professor

Research Interests  
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome; mothers with substance addictions.

Current Research Projects  
Principal investigator, Interactions between infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome and their mothers, funded by Southern Nurses Research Society.

Previous PhD Students  
Mary Kutash. The relationship between nurses’ emotional intelligence and patient outcomes.

Current PhD Student Research  
• Genevieve Cline. Neonatal abstinence syndrome.  
• Andrea Shimko. ICU sleep environment.

Selected Publications  


Groer, M., Maguire, D.J., & Taylor, K. Supporting Breastfeeding for Infants Born to Opioid Dependent Mothers. Nursing Outlook, (copy on file with author).


Dr. Maguire coaches mothers to care for their infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome and investigates the impact of GI distress on withdrawal behaviors.
Selected Publications


Selected Publications


KAITLYN E. RECHENBERG
PhD, MPH, APRN
Assistant Professor

Research Interests
Mental health in youth with chronic conditions; mental health in the pediatric primary care setting; self-management of chronic conditions; maternal-child attachment.

Current Research Projects
Biological markers of stress in youth with Type 1 diabetes.

Selected Publications
Rechenberg, K., Grey, M., & Sadler, L. (under revision). “Anxiety and Type 1 diabetes are like cousins”: The experience of anxiety symptoms in youth with type 1 diabetes. Research in Nursing and Health.


LAURA REDWINE  
PhD  
Associate Professor  
Assistant Dean of Research & Innovation

Research Interests  
Psychosocial factors associated with immune and neuroendocrine activity and cardiovascular disease; mechanisms of integrative modalities

Current Research Projects  
Principal investigator, Autonomic and immuno-vascular mechanisms of antihypertensive effects of Taichi, funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Selected Publications  


CARMEN RODRIGUEZ
PhD, RN, ANP-BC, AOCN
Associate Professor

Research Interests
Sudden speechlessness; communication interventions; symptom management; head and neck cancer.

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator, New communication technology for suddenly speechless hospitalized patients, funded by National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders.

Selected Publications


Dr. Rodriguez assists a simulated patient in using her new communication technology for suddenly speechless patients.
Research Interests
Physiologic consequences of stressful life situations and development of novel interventions, particularly using technology.

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator, Improving dementia caregiver sleep and the effect on heart disease biomarkers, funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Co-Investigator, Intra-Individual Changes in Ambulation and Functional Outcomes among Frail Elders, funded by the Veterans Administration.

Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
- Glenna Brewster. Sleep, depressive symptoms and cognition in older adults and caregivers of persons with dementia.


**Selected Publications**


Research Interests
Chemotherapy induced neuropathy; oncology; physical activity and exercise.

Current Research Projects
Principal investigator, Evidence for exercise in Taxane-Induced neuropathy, the National Institutes of Health.

Selected Publications


Previous PhD Students
• Samia Dutra. Adapting safeMedicate (Medication Dosage Calculation Skills software) for use in Brazil.
• Suzan Abduljawad. Fatigue-related Symptom Clusters, and their Relationship with Functional Status in Older Adult Hospice Patients with Cancer

Current PhD Student Research
• Sharon McNeil. Predictors of Hope in Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer.
Dr. Wang develops a physical activity intervention that is personalized based on fitness capacity, behavioral perception, and symptom experience.
Local Outreach – Global Impact

Preparing 21st-Century Nurses to
Promote Health and Wellness in Our Community
and Around the World

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USF COLLEGE OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA