

Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing's Future – AACN Fall 2012 Minority Nurse Faculty Scholars



Nakia C. Best, MSN, RN, is a first-year PhD student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After receiving her BSN from Winston-Salem State University in 1998, she practiced nursing in cardiovascular intermediate care and cardiothoracic surgical intensive care units. She served as a preceptor for new staff, where she discovered her passion for teaching. She continued her education and obtained an MSN from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and completed the Applied Health Informatics program at Johns Hopkins University. Over the past four years, she has taught undergraduate courses at UNC Chapel Hill. Her research interests include using telehealth in underserved populations to decrease health disparities, improve patient outcomes and health care delivery, and increase patient access to care. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau, Alpha Alpha Chapter, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, and American Nursing Informatics Association.

Anissa Guzman Buhring, CNS, RN, is PhD student at the University of Colorado. She has completed her third year of PhD studies and awaits her comprehensive exam this fall. She graduated from the University of Northern Colorado in 1993 with a BS in nursing and in 2001 with a MS in nursing with an emphasis in nursing education and clinical nurse specialist of chronic illness. Her research interest is exploring the dynamic of power in the chronic illness experience for rural-dwelling Mexican-Americans. She is the Assistant Director of Nursing Programs at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, CO. Anissa has a strong interest in mentoring Latino students and males in their pursuit of nursing as a profession.



Susana J. Calderon, MSN, RN, is a first year PhD student at Illinois State University Mennonite College of Nursing (MCN). She earned her BSN and MSN from Millikin University in 2004 and 2007. She is an instructional assistant professor in the “America’s Promise” Schools Project at MCN. This initiative is intended to improve the health of vulnerable children and youth in school settings through the efforts of BSN students in pediatric and public health nursing. Ms. Calderon is also very passionate about increasing diversity in the healthcare force and serves as the diversity coordinator for MCN. Her research interests are in vulnerable population and health disparities among minority groups. She hopes to facilitate young Latinos in her community to pursue their dreams.

Renee McLeod-Sordjan, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, is a first-year PhD student at Adelphi University. She is an alumna of Pace University where she graduated with a BS in Respiratory Therapy in 1986, BSN in 1994, a MSN as a Family Nurse Practitioner in 1996, and a DNP in 2011. She has devoted 16 years to providing primary and gynecological care to underinsured and underserved clients. Presently, she is Assistant Clinical Professor of the graduate department of the College of Health Professions at Pace University and credentialed as a DNP in the North Shore LIJ Health System. As a doctoral student, she desires to continue her current research of assessing health literacy in Hispanic populations with chronic disease.



Esther R. Smith-Howell, BSN, RN, is a third-year BSN-PhD student at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). She graduated from the University of Florida in 2006 with a BS in Health Science and completed the Accelerated BSN program at IUPUI in 2009. Her research focuses on improving end-of-life decision-making and communication among African Americans and their families. Her experiences as a research assistant, along with her aunt’s battle with cancer, motivated her to return to school to earn a PhD and conduct oncology and end-of-life care research. Esther has worked as a critical care teaching assistant, serves as historian’s assistant of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, and serves on IUPUI faculty committees as a graduate student representative.